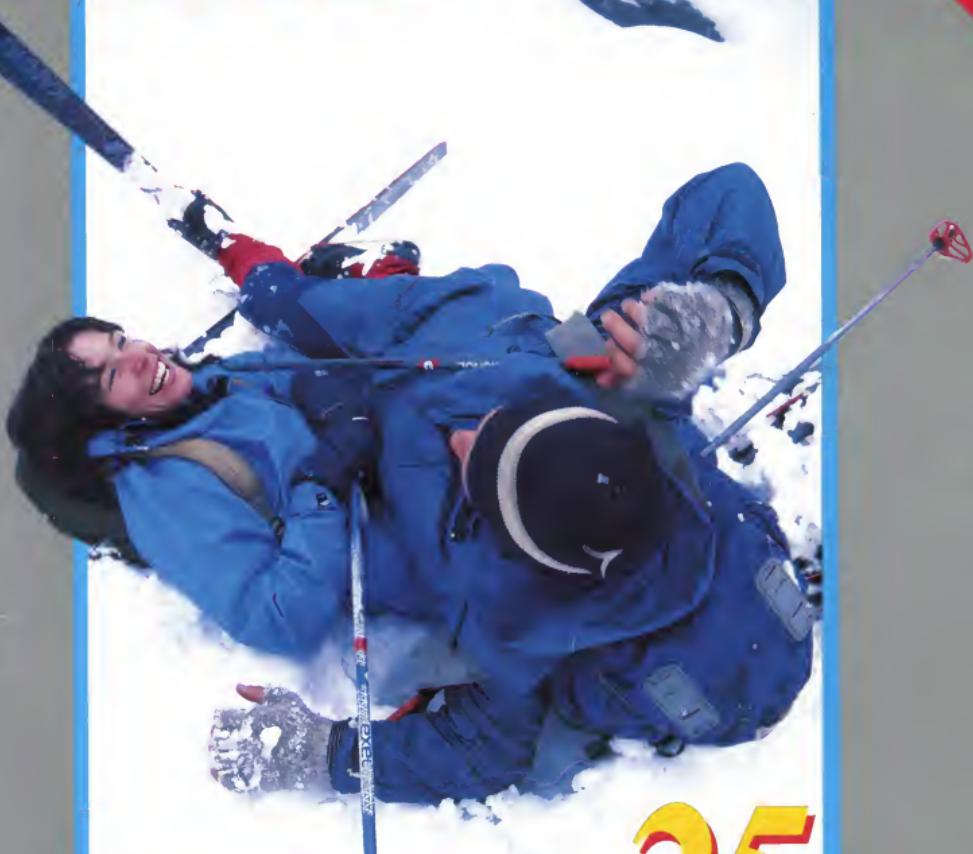


# Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 25

\$4.50\* Winter (July August September) 1987



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# Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE



Winter (July August September) 1987, Vol 7 No 3 (Issue 25) \$NZ5.95\* \$4.50

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**Cover** Avoid the rush and ski mid-week. Photo Bill Bachman. **Contents** Here's to a champagne winter, and our silver edition. Photo Bill Bachman. \*Maximum recommended retail price only

# GET THE JUMP

## WINTER CATALOGUE

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**Distribution** Irene Curran  
**Administration** Greg Andrews, Dianne King

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Sandra Bardwell *Track Notes*  
Yvonne McLaughlin *Canoeing*  
Stephen Buntin *Caving*

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**Contributions**, preferably well illustrated with slides, are welcome. *Guidelines for*

*Contributors* are available on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced with wide margins, using only one side of the paper, and accompanied by an envelope and sufficient postage for their return. Names and addresses should be written on manuscripts and photos as well. While every care is taken, we accept no responsibility for material submitted. Articles represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily those of the publisher.

**Editorial, advertising, subscription, distribution and general correspondence to:** Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181, Australia. Phone (03) 240 8482

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# Wild Times

Twenty-five issues of *Wild* magazine

## Editorial

● BACK IN 1981, JUST BEFORE THE FIRST ISSUE of *Wild* hit the streets that June, there was no magazine in Australia devoted to Australian rucksack sports. The Franklin blockade was still in the future, woodchipping and bush bureaucracy almost unheard of, and the joys

independent magazine, then the odds against survival are lengthened considerably. I had nurtured and prepared for 'the *Wild* idea' for a year or more when, on a ski touring trip to the Bogong High Plains, Victoria, in September 1980, I met Michael Collie and Brian Walters



Chris, left, and Michael meet on the Bogong High Plains, Victoria, September 1980. Francine Gilfedder of ski touring known only to a tiny band of cognoscenti, pioneers with jutting beards, oily black japaras and prickly khaki woolen trousers who groaned under mighty H-frame packs and

at Tawonga Huts. Instant rapport quickly developed into friendship and, shortly after, I outlined my dream to them. Enthusiastic to a fault, they grasped the idea whole-heartedly. Then a country solicitor, Brian quickly thought up the name 'Wild' during a week-long think-tank at his house in Bairnsdale, East Gippsland, and has been closely involved with *Wild* ever



Bush lawyer, Brian 'why don't we just call it Wild' Walters (facing camera) on the Twins, Victoria. Chris Baxter

shivered their nights away in flapping, draughty tents.

Conventional wisdom had it, and still does, that most new businesses fail in their first year. If the enterprise involves publishing an



The editorial 'we'. The Wild office in 1981. Sue Ferrari since. A young graphic design student, Michael soon started working with me at night, and at the end of the year joined me full-time, both of us working long hours without any salary.

With few funds and no gullible investors in

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sight, we made do with the little we had. A *Wild* office was set up in the front bedroom of my small, inner-suburban house. The room was also shared by a piano, a bed and a large wardrobe. Lacking the funds for 'extravagances'



Under the hammer; the first Wild office was in the front room. Chris Baxter

such as filing cabinets, our records were 'filed' in piles on the floor! Depending on the season, Gumbu, our portly Labrador bitch, shivered or panted on our feet, stirring only to defend us from advertisers and contributors who called.

The first issue of *Wild*, July–September 1981, had only 60 pages and was printed entirely in

published in other issues: the lizard sandwich (*Wild* no 8), Stefan Glowacz unroped on Kachoong (no 22) and, of course, the bum (no 22). The bum was subsequently reproduced in *People* magazine (where it sat more comfortably, as it were!) with extracts from outraged readers' letters reproduced, without permission, from *Wild*. For sheer eccentricity we find the Packbed (reviewed in *Wild* no 1) and the night binoculars (no 9) hard to beat, but perhaps until they are available with Thinsulate-lined Gore-Tex carry-pouches they are likely to remain the property of only the most diligent gear freaks.

As *Wild* grew (the current issue is 108 pages, printed in colour throughout, and has audited sales well in excess of those of any Australasian 'outdoor adventure', skiing or conservation magazine) it became necessary to 'move out



Issue no 1: healthy and weighing about 160 grams, born to proud and relieved parents 15 June 1981. of the bedroom' into nearby offices and, shortly after, again to a building twice the size, our present location in the Melbourne suburb of South Yarra. Gumbu retired (to remain as an adviser until her death in 1985), to be replaced by a staff which has grown to bring the total of full-timers to five.

*Rock* was acquired in 1982, and issues have been published each year since. The 1988 issue, incidentally, will be published in 1988 (not late the year before, as has been the practice with issues to date).

With its first issue, *Wild* introduced detailed specialist outdoor product surveys and comparisons to Australia. 'Without fear or favour' to advertisers, these have been considerably refined and expanded over the years and have become a standard reference (as have the *Wild* Directories). Their popularity, however, has not always extended to all advertisers, on at least one occasion a major advertiser has withdrawn advertising from *Wild* (only to return in a later issue) because of an unfavourable product review.

Advertising is a subject never far from magazine publishers' minds. Advertising bookings we have rejected include attempts to justify the logging industry, promote four-wheel-

drive vehicles, and sell alcohol. Once, in our early days, a small hard-won advertisement finally arrived at 'the office'. However, with it was a Press release and a proviso that the advertisement would only be placed if we also published the Press release. In a display of schoolboy devilment, we published the Press



A German optics company came to the aid of print-handicapped readers; from issue no 9 readers were no longer in the dark.

release and returned the advertisement! However, the message soon got around, and we have subsequently generally enjoyed a fair-minded and co-operative relationship with our advertisers.

Like any independent special-interest magazine fortunate enough to have stayed



Wild subscriber, Dick Smith, with friends in Nepal. Tim McCartney-Snape

around for 25 seasons, *Wild* has both changed and seen change in the activities it serves. It is certain that the future will see even more change. We are optimistic that it will be for the better, and hope that we will be equal to it. •

*Chris Baxter*

Chris Baxter  
Managing Editor

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**Monica Chapman** joined Maroondah Bushwalking Club in 1981, soon after the club was formed. Her first walks were in the Cathedral Range and the Bogong High Plains.



She is currently editor of the club's monthly newsletter and regularly leads week-end walks. Monica's association with her husband John began when he visited the club as a guest speaker.

Monica has explored most of Victoria, some of New South Wales and walked in South-West Tasmania several times. In 1986 she bushwalked in all States while helping John research their forthcoming book on Australian bushwalking, on which the article in this issue is based.

Monica is also a keen photographer, skier, and occasionally even rockclimber! She has visited Bali and trekked in Nepal.

**David Mentz**, 17, is a final-year student living with his family on the Mornington Peninsula, south-east of Melbourne. He was introduced to cross country skiing when he joined the Red Hill Scout Troop about five years ago. Since then he has skied and bushwalked extensively in Victoria. A keen photographer, David has a part-time job as sports photographer for a local newspaper, the *Hastings Independent News*.

**David Platt**, like many before him, arrived in Australia from the UK on a working holiday (in 1985) and never left! David was a self-confessed adrenalin addict before he married

## Contributors

**Liz**, an Australian. He has canoed and been mountaineering in Europe and New Zealand and has tried his hand at sea kayaking. David teaches physics and outdoor education at a private school in Melbourne.

**Terry Tremble** was born in the UK but has lived in Australia since 1972. A Melbourne-based engineer, he has been an active rockclimber since 1982, spending much of his spare time at Mt Arapiles, Victoria. From rockclimbing he developed an interest in mountaineering. After the usual New Zealand apprenticeship he visited the European Alps where he quickly made his mark with ascents of major climbs, including the first Australian ascent of the 1938 route on the North Face of the Eiger (described in this issue). He was a member of the ill-fated three-man party which attempted Jannu in the



Nepalese Himalayas shortly after his Eiger ascent. (See *Wild* no 24.) Terry is currently preparing for expeditions to the North Face of Kangchenjunga in 1987 and Mt Everest in 1988, the latter with the Australian Bicentennial Everest Expedition.

**Mark Yule** has lived in Brisbane all his life and has walked extensively throughout Brisbane's Scenic Rim. However, Lamington National Park is easily one of his favourite walking areas. He was introduced to Lamington National Park while in high school. Having a deep appreciation of nature, Mark has strong convictions about conservation and the use of our remaining wilderness; in particular the dwindling areas of rainforest that were once plentiful along Australia's east coast.

These notes describe writers and photographers whose first contribution to *Wild* appears in this issue. Brief notes at the conclusion of articles and features by contributors whose work has been previously published in *Wild* include reference to the issue in which it first appeared.

## The Splendour and Simplicity of Thailand



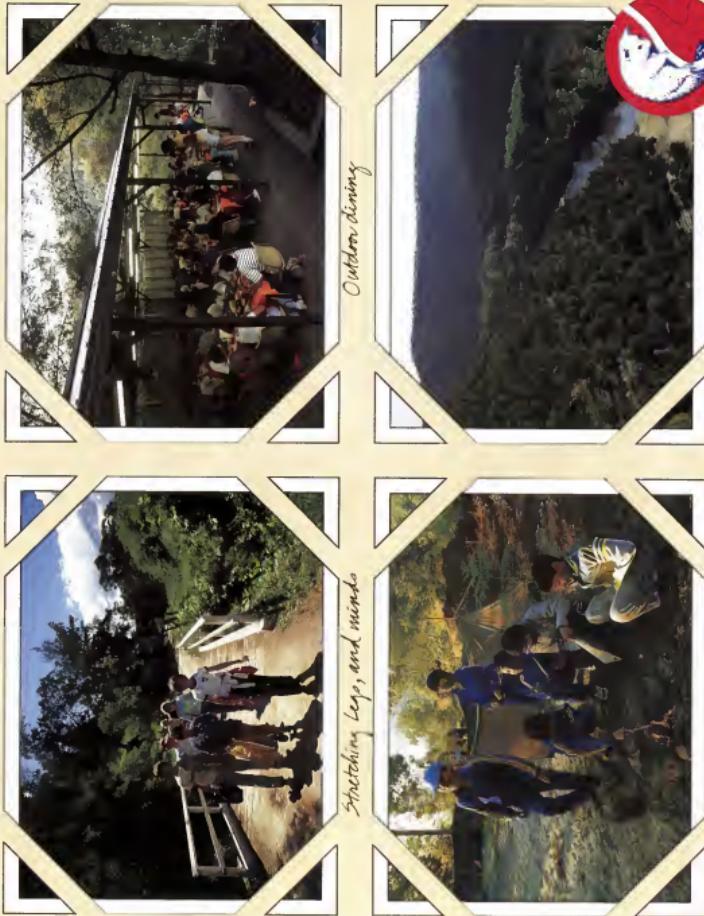
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Photo: G. Nash

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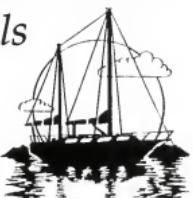
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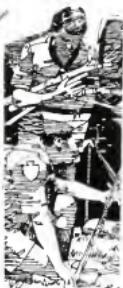
- sliced lamb and peas
- sliced beef and beans
- beef curry and rice
- savoury mince and rice
- beef casserole
- chilli con carne
- beef cubes
- beef mince
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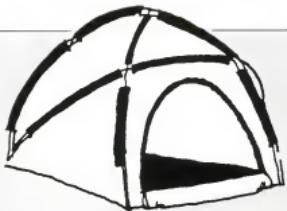
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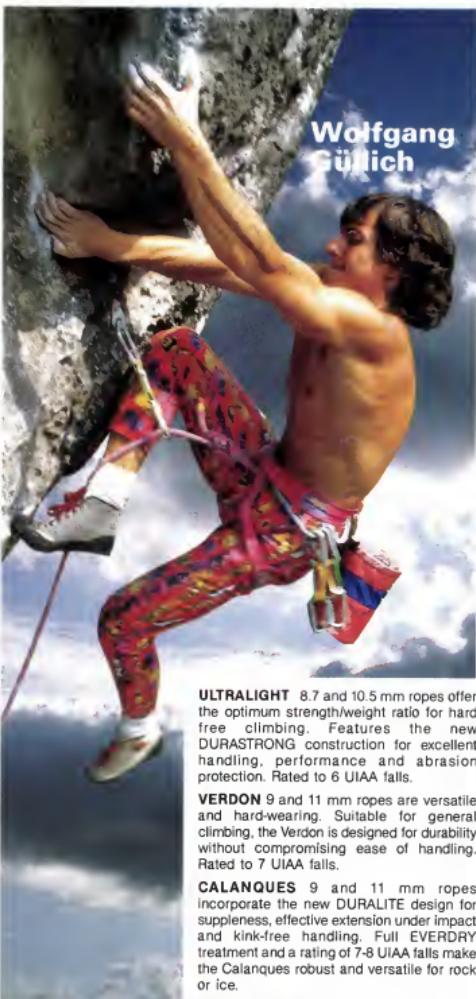
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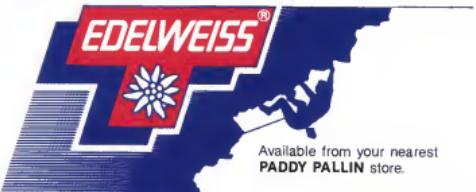


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# Forests Crisis

Queensland, NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and WA face the axe

## Wild Information

• **Shot Down.** The wet tropical rainforest of Queensland's Mt Carbine Tableland is due to be logged this year. Part of the Greater Daintree Wilderness, much of this area, which is said to be of great biological importance, lies outside the Daintree National Park. Conservationists expect that consequent road-building and logging will reduce the rainforest's protective canopy by at least 60%.

As we went to press it was reported that, after the breakdown of negotiations between the Federal and Queensland Governments for a voluntary end to logging in contentious areas of Queensland, the Federal Government is moving inexorably towards World Heritage listing of Queensland's rainforests.



Frenchmans Cap, Western Tasmania World Heritage Area. Right, the Rodger River, National Estate Area, East Gippsland, Victoria. David Tannahill

• **Timber Boycott.** In an attempt to slow the consumption of rainforest timber, the Rainforest Information Centre (PO Box 368, Lismore, NSW 2480) is publishing 20,000 copies of a pamphlet calling for a boycott of the use of rainforest timber. The leaflet outlines the costs of rainforest logging, lists rainforest timbers and their alternatives, and suggests ways in which readers can help end rainforest logging. The campaign is similar to those under way in Europe, Japan and the USA. The RIC points out that 75% of rainforest timber consumed in Australia is imported, mostly from Malaysia. Most of the remaining 25% is from Queensland. The pamphlet points out that each year the world consumes 130 million tonnes of rainforest timber and destroys 61 million hectares of rainforest, an area approximately



equal to that of Victoria. The RIC claims that all the rainforest timbers used in Australia today could be replaced with plantation timbers.

• **Woodchipping.** On a recent visit to Australia, noted British botanist, David Bellamy, entered the fray on behalf of the threatened forests of East Gippsland, Victoria. Following a visit to the area he has come out in favour

of World Heritage listing for half of the little remaining original forest in the region. As the issue is currently under consideration by government, he urges all concerned people to lobby Members of Victorian Parliament to include these forests in new National Parks. He suggests that those who require facts for this purpose contact the East Gippsland Coalition: (03) 663 1561.



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● **Fight for Tasmanian Forests.** The Federal Government's long-awaited Bill to protect Tasmania's wilderness forests was introduced into the House of Representatives in February. The Bill will protect almost 300,000 hectares of virgin forest (including those in the Lemonthyme, Farmhouse Creek, South-east Cape and Weld River areas) while an enquiry considers its World Heritage value, and alternatives to logging in the region.

Other important forests, such as the Douglas River area and Jackeys Marsh, are not covered by the Bill, but conservationists welcome the enquiry which, according to the ACF, 'will reveal decades of waste and mismanagement in Tasmania's forests'. The ACF also notes that 'Almost every public report into this notorious industry has been hushed up by acquiescent State Governments...'

In January it was reported in the Press that Australia's main woodchip buyer, Japan, is threatening to seek alternative sources of supply.

The April 1987 issue of the ACF Newsletter includes a report that 'Effective investigation by the ACF using Freedom of Information (FOI) laws has exposed a scandal linking Federal public servants to the highly misleading Forest Industries Campaign Association (FICA) advertising campaign of late last year...'. Following its FOI disclosures ACF successfully appealed to Senator Button, the Minister responsible, who promptly ordered that public service involvement cease. As a consequence FICA was forced to establish its own office but took with it a public servant... (who) is now the Executive Officer for FICA.'

● **Logging the West.** The ACF has vigorously condemned the draft forest management plans for Western Australia's karri forests which were released in April. It says that the Department of Conservation and Land Management proposes to allow logging in reserves it intends calling 'Forest Parks', areas which were formerly designated by the Government as conservation or recreation reserves. Areas to be logged under the plan include Valley of the Giants, near Walpole, and Lane Poole recreation reserve in the Murray valley.

● **Sheilburne Saved.** In a major conservation victory, the Federal Government has reversed its earlier decision to allow sand mining at north Queensland's Sheilburne Bay. The government rejected the application of a Japanese consortium 'chiefly because of its impact on the environment'; the Australian Conservation Foundation has reported.

● **Duck for Cover.** In rejecting recent calls for a moratorium on duck shooting, the New South Wales Minister for Planning and Environment, Bob Carr, claimed that there was no justification for a shooting ban on conservation grounds. He further claimed that 'The species subject to shooting are in no danger of extinction'. During the 1987 NSW duck open season', which ran from 14 March to 31 May, thousands of licensed shooters were each allowed to shoot 20 ducks on the first day and 10 a day thereafter, a maximum potential 'bag' of 800 ducks each.

● **NSW Park News.** The NSW Premier, Barrie Unsworth, recently opened two major new tourist centres in the Blue Mountains, the Blue

Mountains Heritage Centre and the Katoomba Renaissance Centre. The government has taken what it calls other 'environmental initiatives' in the region, including the announcement of a new plan to purchase significant sites for the region's 'open space network'. Also in February, the government announced the formal reservation of about 3,200 hectares of additions

damage. Opponents of the Act, such as the four-wheel-drive lobby, have stirred up considerable adverse publicity to the Act. The Wilderness Society claims that the four-wheel-drive lobby has resorted to scare tactics and misinformation in its campaign, which involves the use of slogans such as '36 National Parks to be closed to the public'.



The granite sea cliffs at Coles Bay, Tasmania, are popular with climbers and now the subject of a new guide. Chris Baxter

(around Katoomba) to the Blue Mountains National Park, bringing the park's total area to almost 250,000 hectares.

Additions to a number of NSW parks and reserves, and the establishment of new ones, were recently announced: Yuraygir (610 hectares), Nombinnie Nature Reserve (57,000 hectares); the largest remaining area of mallee land in NSW), Sea Acres Nature Reserve (62 hectares); the largest intact stand of coastal rainforest in NSW, at Port Macquarie), Garawarra State Recreation Area (900 hectares); adjacent to Royal National Park, which itself is to receive an 'additional' \$600,000 'to allow important upgrading work to be undertaken', Weddin Mountains National Park (65 hectares), Scabby Range Nature Reserve (48 hectares), Bald Rock National Park (1,560 hectares) and Marramarra National Park (46 hectares).

● **Bush Sex Attack.** According to a Press report, an 18-year-old bushwalker and her 24-year-old male companion were assaulted at gunpoint and tied up in Royal National Park near Curracarong Pools. The girl was then sexually assaulted.

● **NSW Wilderness Act.** The Barrington Tops, an important wilderness area north of Sydney, has become one of the focal points in the debate over the proposed NSW Wilderness Act. This area is popular with four-wheel-drive enthusiasts and has suffered considerable

● **Coles Bay.** The Climbers Club of Tasmania has published a much-needed guidebook to rockclimbing at Coles Bay. Copies are available for \$2.00 each (plus postage) from the CCT, c/- Tasmanian Environment Centre, 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart, Tas 7000.

● **Covered.** Natmap, the Division of National Mapping, reports that it has completed its 1:100,000 scale topographic mapping programme with the recent publication of six maps of south-west Western Australia. Commenced in 1968, the programme has involved the publication of 1,646 maps. Natmap claims it will now be able to devote more resources to map revision, although it is still to complete its 1:250,000 scale national series. Natmap encourages readers to send it map correction reports and has specially printed forms for this purpose. Write to PO Box 31, Belconnen, ACT 2616.

● **No Slouch.** Since his extraordinary ten-day run from the Barrington Tops, NSW, to Walhalla, Victoria, last November (see *Wild* no 24), Peter Tresester has made a number of epic trips in NSW. In December he did Ciastral Canyon at night in 1 hour 50 minutes, returning the next month in daylight to cut the time to 1 hour 23 minutes, carrying all his gear, car-park to car-park. Also in January, he returned to the Barrington Tops where he did the Williams River Canyon in 4 hours 14 minutes. In February he completed, in 13 hours 5 minutes, the 'Epic Trilogy': carrying all gear throughout, Tresester started this little jaunt from Kanangra Walls car

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# Bush Bureaucracy

## Backlash over mounting red tape

park and abseiled Kanangra Falls Direct, did Kanangra Canyon, climbed the famous Three Peaks (Mts Cloudmaker, Paralyser and Guougang) and completed the rockclimb of the West Wall of the Three Sisters. Finally, in March, he ran from Katoomba to Kanangra, return, in 11 hours 45 minutes, slashing 2 hours 18 minutes off his 1982 record. Apparently all this activity has something to do with Treseder's planned 5,000 kilometre tiger walk from Cape York to Wilsons Promontory via National Park systems.

• **Mountain' Bureaucracy.** In commenting on the 1985-6 annual report of Victoria's Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands, the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs has



A Canadian climber being rescued after falling, unroped, from Syringa Grade 10 at Mt Arapiles, Victoria. Mt Matheson, right, Malcolm Matheson falling from his new climb at Mt Stapleton in western Victoria's Grampians which, at grade 30, is the only climb of this difficulty in Australia outside Mt Arapiles. Matheson is the second Australian to complete a climb of this grade. Sue Crone

quoted from the report, in its February newsletter, that 'Forest royalties represented 47% of Cf&L revenue, totalling \$36.2 million in 1985-6'.

The following month there were reports in the Press that the Victorian Premier, John Cain, conceded a need to improve government financial practices after the tabling of a particularly critical report by the Auditor-General, Dick Humphry, for 1985-6. The Age reported that, among various revelations, the Auditor-General found that the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands had underestimated its salary bill in 1985-6 by \$4.7 million, and that \$216,000 appeared to be unaccounted for by the department.

A proposed 'outdoor recreation secretariat', involving, among other things, the establishment of a staffed office, has been approved in principle by the Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation. A potential member, the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, has observed that,



in return for anticipated substantial government funding to the project, the Federation would be 'expected to: bring bushwalking to more people (and) promote safety in walking to a wider audience...'. The Federation added 'it would be galling to fall by the wayside while other recreation groups accept the current offer of government funds and grow into powerful organisations as a result'.

The new Adventure Guides Association of Australia (see *Wild* no 24), at its February meeting, listed 11 suggested aims of the association. These emphasize the establishment of 'standards' and 'qualifications' and other forms of regulation and control of wilderness pursuits.

With money obtained by a grant from Victoria's Department of Sport and Recreation, the Victorian Climbing Club has drawn up a draft

scheme for the accreditation of rockclimbing instructors in Victoria. The highly controversial draft scheme (see *Wildfire*) aims to disqualify from teaching rockclimbing in Victoria anyone who does not meet its requirements. Three levels of accreditation are envisaged, the highest of which requires, among other things, the ability 'to lead any nominated climb to grade 20', to climb at least 3,000 metres (at least half as on-sight leads), and to have instructed for not less than 100 days in any three-year period. Comments are sought by the VCC: GPO Box 1725P, Melbourne, Vic 3001.

It is reported that Arapiles Shire Council is considering an application from a commercial rockclimbing instruction organization to build a 'climbing centre' below and within easy walking distance of the cliffs at Mt Arapiles, Australia's most popular rockclimbing area.



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34 Dean Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1PG, England.

● **Body Found.** The body of cross country skier, Stephen Crean, who disappeared in the Mt Kosciusko area in August 1985 (see *Wild* no 19), was found last summer near the Thredbo-Jindabyne road in bizarre circumstances. Among other things, it was reported in the Press that a man had been charged with removing the skull from the body for his bone collection.

● **Coast to Coast.** New Zealand's toughest endurance event, the Steinlager Coast to Coast, is a 238 kilometre crossing of the South Island by bicycle, foot and canoe. Normally held over two days, this year's event, held in February, also included a one-day event over the same course. The one-day event was won by Russell Prince in 12 hours 19 minutes 51 seconds and the individual two-day event by Terry Newlands in 12 hours 2 minutes 8 seconds.



Crossing the upper Deception River during the Steinlager Coast to Coast endurance event, New Zealand. Right, the start at Sumner Beach, Kumara on the west coast of the South Island. Andrew Conway

● **Mittagundj.** The Founding Director of this well-known educational institution in the Victorian Alps, Ian Stapleton (see *Wild* no 21), has retired after ten years at Mittagundj. The new Director is former staffer Rick Harrison.

● **Feathered Friends.** The Bird Observers Club has published a useful leaflet, *Photographing Australian Birds*. Phone (03) 877 5342 for details.

● **Arise, Sir Tim.** Members of the successful Australian Mt Everest expedition (of which *Wild* was a sponsor—see article in no 15) were awarded the Order of Australia 'for service to mountaineering' in January. Geoff Bartram, Lincoln Hall, Andrew Henderson, Tim Macarthur-Snape and Greg Mortimer are the first Australian climbers to be honoured in this way.

● **Canyon Exits.** Over the years many regular visitors to Blue Mountains canyons have been concerned at acts of vandalism in canyons, such as the cutting of steps in Rainbow Ravine, the usual exit to Claustal Canyon, about ten

years ago. Some individuals, seemingly not content with the graffiti on buildings and railway carriages, have decided to leave their marks painted on the walls of canyons. Arrows and the word 'exit' seem to be their favourite tags. Indeed, last summer, a well known Newcastle bushwalker was almost caught in the act by another party of bushwalkers who came upon

height gain of over 1,800 metres, the highest single ascent in Australia. Further information: (02) 29 1581.

● **Australian Rogaining Championships.** To be held in NSW on 5–6 September, the 1987 championships are expected to be particularly attractive to interstate entrants, who do not have



a freshly painted sign in Wollangambe Canyon. Claustal Canyon has also had an arrow painted to mark one of the ways out. Many who venture down canyons expecting to find a pristine environment are dismayed by such acts.

The placing of any graffiti or sign in a canyon in a National Park is illegal. All canyons can be places of great danger, especially in the event of a flash flood. Anybody entering one should be prepared to find their own way out.

David Noble

● **Survival of the Fittest.** An American endurance event of this name was held, and filmed for US television, in the Snowy Mountains, NSW, in November. A number of international athletes raced in a series of events including climbing, abseiling, kayaking and running. Local contestants were Australian cross country ski racer, David Hislop, and New Zealand 'iron man', John Howard. The event was won by an American.

On 28 November Wilderness Expeditions is holding 'The Kosciusko Ascent', an 18 kilometre race from the Swampy Plains River to Thredbo via the summit of Mt Kosciusko. The route climbs the notorious Hannels Spur, involving a

to pay the entry fee and who will each receive a \$50 subsidy for their travel expenses from the Australian Rogaining Association. Contact (03) 29 5537 for details.

● **Trussed Up.** Following the completion of the first Australian Expedition to the Arctic (see *Wild* nos 21–23) the leader, Earle Bloomfield, in February announced the establishment of the Young Explorers Trust and the Ammassalik Project. YET was established to foster Australia's 'most valuable resource—courageous, creative and disciplined leadership'. Its inaugural expedition will be to the Kimberley region of Western Australia, in April 1988. The Ammassalik Project involves four young Australian kayak experts travelling to east Greenland in July 1988 'to teach the skills of kayaking and fibreglass lamination'.

● **Walking the Otways.** The first print run (2,000 copies) of this book (see review in *Wild* no 24) sold out promptly and a second printing of 2,000 copies has been completed. Those who have a copy of the first edition can obtain a list of errata from the Geelong Bushwalking Club, PO Box 675, Geelong, Vic 3220.



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● **Telemark Races.** This year there will be a 'Grand Prix Series' prize awarded to the best performer in three Victorian Telemark races: Mt Buller Telemark Cup (12 July), Falls Creek Telemark Cup (12 August) and the Victorian Telemark Championship (Mt Buller, 16 August). Each race consists of two timed runs through a giant slalom course, with participants required to execute a Telemark turn at each gate. Details: (03) 720 4647.

● **Bush Triathlon.** Paddy Pallin has joined the Whitehorse Canoe Club as sponsor of the annual Whitehorse Bush Triathlon. Entry categories for men and women now include marathon and combination teams for those who want to compete in only one or two sections. To be held near Licola, Victoria, on 6 September, the 1987 event entails 15 kilometres of white-water canoeing, 25 kilometres of mountain road cycling and 8 kilometres of cross country running. Phone (03) 67 4845 for further details.

● **Cashing In.** In a recent ABC radio interview, Pat Cash's fitness coach, Anne Quinn, revealed her recommended method of training . . . walking. In magazine articles bearing titles such as 'The Tao of Walking', leaders of America's walking renaissance extol the virtues of putting your best foot forward. Footwear manufacturers are, predictably, falling over themselves to fuel this year's fad with sophisticated and exorbitantly priced shoes made especially 'for walking'. For 1987, at least, bushwalking may unfortunately lose its aura of eccentricity.

● **Mt Anne Expeditions.** Sydney University Speleological Society recently mounted an expedition to the North-east Ridge of Mt Anne. This area already contains Australia's deepest cave, Anne-a-Kanana (373 metres), and several other deep caves. Throughout the three-week expedition the group was also joined by Tasmanian cavers. January's appalling weather hampered their efforts, with either rain or snow falling almost every day. None the less, the group succeeded in discovering a vertical kilometre of caves including Deep Thought (185 metres) near Keller Cellar (155 metres).

During March a seven-man Czechoslovakian expedition also visited the area. They too were hampered by atrocious weather conditions. (It snowed at least once every ten days in Tasmania from the end of October until early April.) The Czech cavers continued exploring caves along the North-east Ridge beyond the point reached by the Sydney University group. They discovered 11 caves averaging 50 metres deep. The deepest was Goggled Eyes (77 metres) which has two entrances and over 400 metres of passage, some of it quite large in cross-section.

In response to the attention this area has received lately, the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service is monitoring usage of the Anne-a-Kanana Cave campsite with a view to the regulation of numbers to minimize human impact in the area.

Stephen Banton

● **Wilderness Society Walks.** The NSW Branch of the Wilderness Society has recently introduced an outdoor activities programme in a number of the rucksack sports. Offered to Wilderness Society members, many of the trips in the programme are incorporated into the

society's conservation campaigns. Leaders are currently sought for future trips. Free copies of the current programme are available from 57 Liverpool Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

● **Mountain Marathon.** Silva and Karrimor have combined as major sponsors of a two-day 'mountain marathon', with prizes said to be valued at over \$15,000, to be held in Tasmania's Central Highlands on 16-17 January 1988.

● **Kiwis on Big Ones.** In March a six-man New Zealand team led by Mike Perry left for Tibet to attempt a ski descent of 8,013 metre Shishapangma.

A New Zealand attempt to repeat the original, French, route on Annapurna I, the first 8,000 metre peak to be climbed, was abandoned when the leader, Rob Hall, was injured in a fall near Base Camp. A high-point of 5,600 metres had been reached.



Described as a 'navigation race requiring competitive navigation in wild and desolate mountain country', the event is designed to test competitors' endurance and navigational skill in difficult terrain. The open class requires competitors, running in pairs, to carry their food and equipment over a 75 kilometre course. There are also 45 and 25 kilometre courses. Further information: (03) 489 9766.

● **Jubilee Youth Trek.** This major South Australian youth venture (see *Wild* no 22) has been completed. A slender but well produced book on the project has appeared together with a *'Bushwalkers' Country Code* leaflet, and a poster giving guidelines for day walks.

● **Cooking their Goose.** Last summer Australian super-alpinist, John Faintini, completed his 22nd ascent of Mt Cook, New Zealand's highest peak, breaking the previous record of 19 ascents by one person. Faintini's latest season included a solo ascent of the difficult route White Dream on the South Face of Mt Cook and a close call when he fell 100 metres, unroped, whilst descending Porters Col.

● **Deported.** It is reported in the Press that Australian botanist, Peter Faigl, has been expelled from the east Malaysian state of Sarawak for leading anti-logging protests. The Penan people of the Tutoh and Limbang Rivers region have threatened to fight back over the destruction of their region by logging activities.

● **Festival.** The second World Festival of Mountain Pictures will be held on 14-18 October in Juan les Pins, France.

● **Alpine Style?** It is reported that the 1988 Australian Bicentennial Everest Expedition will cost about \$850,000, of which the Australian Bicentennial Authority is providing \$50,000, with the rest coming from nearly 30 other sponsors. The expedition hopes to climb the West Ridge, and the South Col route.

● **To the Bottom.** Alan Warild recently became the first Australian to bottom the world's deepest cave, Reseau Jean Bernard (-1,555 metres). Apparently Warild also won the prussiking races at the recent International Union of Speleology conference in Spain.

● **Corrections.** The Editorial in *Wild* no 23 refers to a road being constructed into Werribee Gorge State Park. Apparently the quarry referred to was commenced to supply gravel for the construction of the nearby Western Freeway, and the road built from the quarry and the freeway for that purpose. The road was then extended from the quarry to the foot of the gorge by the farmer who owned that land at the time, before it was sold to the Victorian Government. The section of road from the quarry to the freeway was sealed, by the government, after its use for freeway construction had finished.

Methylated spirits stoves neither need nor have pumps as stated in the 'features' column of the stoves survey table on page 67 of *Wild* no 24.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send contributions to the Editor, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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# Snow Shelters

The cool way to stay warm, with Andrew Brookes

**Wild Ideas**

● SNOW CAVES AND IGLOOS CAN BE MADE warm, dry, roomy and comfortable. They cost nothing. The best ones are beautiful, especially when lit by candles. A good snow shelter can provide the ultimate in low-tech wilderness accommodation. What better use of natural resources than to build a home from snow, each year renewed and recycled by Nature? But do not rush to discard your tent just yet.

Often an appropriate drift for snow caving is not available. Sometimes the snow is not suitable for building an igloo. Warm wind and rain can thaw most of the snow cover. If you need shelter fast you may have neither the time



**Above**, snow cave entrance, Mt Cook region, New Zealand. Andrew Brookes. **Top right**, blind faith in snow engineering? Trevor Houghton. **Right**, snow cave interior. Brookes

nor the strength to construct a cave or igloo. The advantage of a tent is that it can always be there when you need it. Make sure that it is. Even if you plan to use snow shelters, carry sufficient tents for the whole party. If yours is not a tent specifically designed for snow camping, check its suitability (see *Wild no 20*). Be sure the poles are strong. You may need to carry metal disks to put under the poles so they will not sink into the snow. The peg loops may need to be extended with cord so that snow pegs can be used. Carry some pegs that can be driven into the ground if the snow cover is thin.

Whether or not you sleep in a tent, snow camping presents some particular problems. Obtaining water can be one. You may have to melt snow, so carry sufficient fuel for that. At least some of your meals should be chosen for quick and easy preparation in one bite. Lack of fuel or bad weather can rule out gastronomic extravagance. You will need something to insulate your stove from the snow. A small piece of closed-cell foam will usually do. Extra pieces



are handy to sit on or as 'place mats' to prevent hot food cooling instantly. Butane gas stoves are unsuitable (the gas will not vaporize readily

in the cold). Shellite stoves should have a pump fitted. Make certain that your tent or shelter is well ventilated if cooking inside. People have died from carbon monoxide poisoning using stoves in poorly aired shelters.

Having to leave the warmth of your shelter to urinate can be more than a nuisance. In a blizzard the heat lost and dampness gained in the process can be significant. A good solution is to carry a 'pee bottle'. Take it from me that it needs a capacity greater than 600 millilitres. Dacron booties, widely held to be indicators of sexual preference, are good for quick sorties outside to shovel snow. Be careful though. You could go for a dangerous slide if the snow has frozen hard overnight.

Damp items such as boots, parkas and sleeping bags can freeze solid unless they are put in plastic bags and kept warm—between two sleeping bags is a good place. Plenty of thin closed-cell foam is useful for the floor of any shelter. A sleeping mat is essential. Dampness from your body and clothing can reduce the effectiveness of your sleeping bag over successive 'pit days'. A Sigg bottle with a good seal can be filled with hot water, inserted in a sock, and put into the bag to help dry it out. Catalytic pocket warmers do a similar job, but smell a bit. Do not leave things lying about outside your shelter. You may lose them for good if it snows.

A small brush is handy for removing snow

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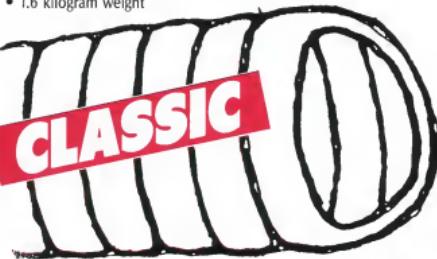
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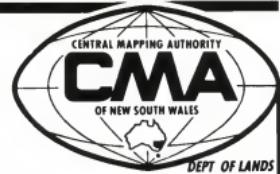
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from clothing and boots. A snow saw is useful for cave construction, and almost essential for igloo building. You could try an ordinary pruning saw if the real thing seems a bit pricey. A snow shovel is essential for shelter building, and very useful if using tents. Most shovels will break if embedded in the snow and levered. They should only be used for digging soft snow, or to cut each side of a block before gently levering it free.

Roots of snow shelters should be dome- or tunnel-shaped, and smooth. Moisture running down the surface will collect at any flat spots or protrusions and eventually drip. Flat roofs are also prone to sagging and collapse. A shelter should have only one entrance and one ventilation hole, otherwise it will be draughty. Any small holes between the blocks of an igloo or in a wall of a snow cave will be quickly enlarged by air currents unless carefully sealed. The ventilation hole should be at the highest point of the roof, so that there is nowhere for warm air to collect and melt the ceiling. The ceiling will be most likely to drip near the ventilation hole, so do not sleep directly under that spot. The top of the entrance should be lower than the sleeping platform, so that cold air drains away. A low entrance will not need to be blocked at night. This helps to keep the temperature down a bit so the roof of the shelter freezes. Snow shovels must be kept inside the shelter in case it is necessary to dig your way out.

Snow shelters are very quiet. The lack of wind makes the internal temperature, which hovers around 0°C, very comfortable. Stoves work very efficiently in the still air. A single candle will light up a cave or igloo dramatically.

Bear in mind that drifting snow may camouflage your shelter. It may be difficult to find again in bad weather. Make sure your cave or igloo is marked with skis or dead sticks. Other skiers will appreciate your efforts also. Most dislike collisions with frozen igloos and drifting through snow cave roofs.

Most groups should allow about three hours of hard work to build a comfortable cave or shelter. Obviously, experienced teams can shorten this time given good snow conditions. It is a good idea to wear waterproofs with a minimum of clothing underneath while digging, and put warm dry clothes back on once the work is finished.

**Snow caves.** A snow cave in a deep drift is very resistant to bad weather. Even rainstorms can be withstood if the snow above has a few good ice layers, especially if the drift is steep. Entrance tunnels can drift up quickly, and regular clearing is necessary in bad weather. I have known a couple to sleep through a blizzard to find that their cave had insufficient oxygen to sustain a flame by morning. Keep a ski stock inside to clear the ventilation shaft.

Old snow makes the best snow caves, although if it is frozen too hard digging may be very difficult. Fallen snow undergoes a natural settling process, so allow extra height when digging a cave in new snow, as the ceiling will slowly descend over the next few days.

The steeper the drift selected for digging, the easier it is to remove the excavated snow. A steep drift on a gentle slope is ideal. Digging caves on steep slopes is not recommended for people without expert mountaineering skills.

There are no building regulations covering snow caves. These are my suggestions.

1 Dig a generous entrance tunnel straight into the drift. The top of the tunnel will be the eventual roof of the cave. Make it large enough to stand in and swing a shovel. Within half an hour you will be digging in a comfortable standing position, completely sheltered from the elements. You should be able to heave snow directly out and down the slope to avoid moving the same snow twice.

2 When you are far enough in to have a good thick roof, widen the tunnel to make the standing area of the cave. An area in which to stand and pack rucksacks is a great luxury. This will be the cave's highest point, so poke a slanting ventilation shaft through the ceiling.

3 Dig sleeping and cooking platforms at about waist height. This should give sufficient ceiling height to allow you to sit up. Keep the roof curving smoothly down from above the standing area. The cooking area should be fairly close to the ventilation shaft.

4 Use blocks of snow to wall up the entrance tunnel completely. Carefully pack any gaps with snow. Allow about half an hour for the wall to freeze, then cut an arched entrance through the wall, below the level of the sleeping platform. A pit can be dug to reduce the need to stoop under the arch.

**Igloos** can be constructed when the snow is not deep enough for caving. Given a choice, I prefer to use a snow cave. Igloos are vulnerable to warm winds and rain, conditions which can occur at any time in the Australian Alps.

1 You will need to assess the suitability of the snow for block cutting. It may be necessary to pack an area and allow it to harden before use.

2 If possible, cut blocks from inside the igloo to make it roomier. Mark out a circle, and place the blocks in a spiral pattern. Use a measure, such as stick, to ensure that blocks are of uniform size. It takes practice to learn how best to cut and lay the blocks. Make the blocks as large as can be reasonably handled.

3 Do not leave it too late to start doming the roof. It may end up too flat, or too high to finish. Igloos of a diameter much greater than two or three metres will be hard to build without a ladder!

4 Make sure that gaps between the blocks are thoroughly sealed, and smooth off the roof. Dig an entrance pit below the level of the sleeping area. Do not put the entrance in the lee of the igloo, as that is the area most prone to drifting up. Reinforce the windward side of the igloo. Make a ventilation hole at the highest point of the roof.

For a larger shelter, two modest igloos joined by a tunnel will be stronger than one giant one.

**Emergency shelters.** I have not ever had to construct an emergency shelter, except out of curiosity. These are my suggestions. Keep it small, and unless you are cooking, keep ventilation to a minimum. Usually the quickest construction method is to make a simple cave, and use blocks of snow to brick up the opening from the inside. The shelter will then be warm enough to drip, so wear your waterproofs. Hug yourself to reduce your surface area. Use skis or rucksack to keep you off the snow. Leave a ski outside to mark your position. ●

Andrew Brookes (see Contributors in Wild no 13) is an experienced ski touring and bushwalking instructor as well as an avid wilderness photographer.

# Wild Ski Touring



• KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK IS THE Mecca of Australia's cross country skiers. And rightly so, for within its boundaries lie Australia's highest peaks as well as her most extensive snow-fields. Whilst the Main Range might be the jewel in the crown, the areas to the north and west have delights of their own to offer. In this article we will be looking at these latter areas . . . from Kiandra south to the Grey Mare, west over the Dargals, and as far east as the Brassy Mountains. Evocative names, and the country they describe has its own special flavour. Long stretching valleys, gushing rivers, secret hidden side valleys waiting to be explored, plains so wide you think you will never get across them, snow gums creeping up the hillsides, and friendly treed ridges tantalizingly offering glimpses of distant views. Occasionally, as if by surprise, a peak pops up, resplendently white in its coat of snow.

Right smack in the middle of all this stands the monarch of the mountains—Mt Jagungal. Because of her position, isolated and aloof, she casts her special magic on all passing in her vicinity. Like a Siren, she lures the traveller to her rocks, but instead of shipwreck, the skier is greeted by an all-encompassing view from her summit (providing the gods are kind with the weather).

This is not country for the faint hearted. Travel is labour intensive. To savour this area fully, longer multi-day trips are necessary, and packs are consequently heavy. No resort-based day-trippers here, with their flimsy skis and light day packs. This is the realm of the tourer, and the country is less crowded.

One of the main attributes is the potential for long through-trips. Nowhere else in Australia is it possible to lose yourself so completely in such a large sheet of snow. As well as having great wilderness value, this remoteness has its

own dangers. This was brought home to me on a recent trip in the area, when we chanced upon a party evacuating a skier with a broken leg. They were fortunate in that the weather was kind, they had a large, strong party, and knew how to construct a sled from skis, stocks and a snow shovel. Despite this they were running out of steam, and our help was appreciated. But consider a smaller party

you do if you broke a stock, or worse still broke a leg? Help can be a long way away.

Likewise, the remoteness calls for flexibility of planning. Many of the routes are exposed and could delay the completion of a trip if bad weather prevailed. Spare food should be carried for this eventuality and tight itineraries avoided. Sometimes lower level 'escape' routes exist, and these should be



Camp on the Toolong Range. Mt Jagungal in the distance. Andrew Stenhouse. **Opposite**, skiing the Grey Mare Range in perfect conditions. Tom Millar

in bad weather with less experience . . .

Visitors to isolated areas need to be self reliant. Comprehensive first aid and repair kits are mandatory. After all, what would

investigated at the planning stage.

Mountain huts are a feature of the area. They are mementoes left behind from other eras, from cattlemen, miners and, more recently, the hydro-electricity scheme. While many are cold, draughty tin sheds, others are cosy, full of character

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A SPECIAL FLAVOUR

# Kiandra Day-skiing

Andrew Barnes shows us a secret winter playground

• KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK: IMAGES OF CARTHURS PEAK, MT TOWNSEND AND ALICE RAWSON, BUT WAIT A MOMENT. THINK INSTEAD OF HIDDEN VALLEYS, SKIING past gold-mining batteries, hesitant exploration of treed gullies and views over ridges leading to Mt Jagungal. This is the far north of the park, a world away from the Main Range addict. Clip on your light gear and have a look.

Getting to know the area surrounding Kiandra can be a delight in exploratory skiing. However, the more obvious areas provide maintained and well marked trails. Cabramurra is especially well looked after by the local racing club, with a comfortable day-shelter and excellent tracks for everyone from beginners to training racers. Mt Selwyn has the usual alpine resort facilities, but on a small scale.



Campsites on Dunn's Hill, just west of Kiandra. Right, skiing the trees near the Tumut Ponds Fire Track, Kings Cross area. Andrew Barnes

Nordic instruction is available and there are marked trails. Tow tickets are much less expensive here (due to the limited run) and provide a cheaper chance to practice cross country downhill technique. Three Mile Dam is an interesting area imbued with history. The dam was built by the Chinese and skiing around it or to the south will lead you past many remnants of the late nineteenth century gold-rush. This is a good area for anyone a little shaky on navigation or confidence but wishing to do some exploring.

If you are confident and looking for the most exhilarating skiing, park your car along the Snowy Mountains Highway. Relate your position to a ridge, valley or creek and you will soon be blazing your own trail away from the crowds. The following are a few of my more memorable trips.

Dunn's Hill, just west of the highway a kilometre from Kiandra, provides an uphill slog to the top. Take a bearing on the Pig Gully Hut ruin (south-west) and admire some magnificent snow gums at the southern end of a snowy plain. Picking your way



through a dense snow gum 'forest' and out on to the treeless flats below Mt Selwyn should be a highlight of the day. Depending on the ability of your party, Four Mile Hut (south from the ruin if you can find it) adds extra interest to the trip. Coming back, the run down Dunn's Hill is a fitting end.

One of my most memorable runs last season, including many on the Main Range, was from the trig point near the Tumut Ponds Fire Track. To find it, ski along the Kings Cross Road from Mt Selwyn car-park to Kings Cross Branch almost due south following the Tumut Ponds Fire Track toward the trig point marked 1,593 metres. There are excellent views of Mt Jagungal. If you are impatient it will be time to plunge fearlessly among the trees down the ridge leading south-south-west. The beauty of this run is that it has been built out at some time in the past. The trees are alive but the undergrowth is gone. Skiers of all levels of ability will enjoy it, your ability determining how close you ski the fall-line. The grade steepens within view of the Tumut Reservoir, and the less experienced fall by the wayside. Fast turning decisions must be made as the snow gums tighten and the run finishes in scrub. 'Tree skiing as good as in Vermont', said Mike Roche, instructor from the Von Trapp Family Lodge—high praise indeed, for Vermont!

Drive up the Snowy Mountains Highway north from Kiandra and park where it crosses Three Mile Creek. Skiing up the creek, west, is marred early on by the power lines but improves as you ascend through the small, picturesque valley carved by the creek. Explore through snow gums on Shaw Hill then make sure you ski west to the edge of the plateau looking toward Wallaces Creek. The view is wild and surprisingly pristine. Turn north and follow the fire track until opposite the Eucumbene

River. The 45° turn from south to east hides a pleasant waterfall, just the spot for some scroggin. Small cornices provide good entertainment as you meander back across Kiandra Plain.

There is a hidden valley, only a ridge away from the downhill run on Mt Selwyn, where nobody skis. The runs on either side of Cleft Creek are excellent for short, steep, cross country downhill on light gear. I am not going to tell you how to get there; suffice to say the view is exhilarating, the view from the valley towards Mt Jagungal second to none, and the spirit embodies the entire region. Small, removed from roads by only a ridge or two of snow, yet with the feel of back country. Go and find it for yourself. \*

**Maps.** Cabramurra (8526-11-S) and Ravine (8526-11-N) in the Central Mapping Authority of NSW 1:25,000 series.

**Access.** Mt Selwyn Ski Touring Map, 1:25,000, NSW Ski Association.

**Access.** Areas covered by these notes are generally at a low elevation, about 1,500 metres. In an average season they will only be skiable when there is reasonable snow cover. To get there from Sydney go through Canberra, Cooma and Adaminaby. From Melbourne it is much quicker to drive from Corryong as if going to Tumbarumba, turning off after Tooma and following the signs to Kiandra. The road is kept open in winter but can be slippery and dangerous. The road to Cabramurra from Khancoban is closed in winter. Adaminaby has full facilities. Kiandra has none. \*

Andrew Barnes (see Contributors in Wild no 13) is a ski touring instructor and addict. When not on the snow he paddles white-water rivers.

and can be pleasant to stay in.

But beware, there are residents other than humans. The native bush rats, whilst cute little marsupials, have ravenous appetites. Last winter they chewed through my pack, ate my leather Nordic racing gloves, chewed out the insides from my boots, and then for dessert, nibbled into my tube of blue klister (ski wax). I even witnessed one rascal doing battle with a Sorbathane inner sole!

One should not rely on huts though. Some of the more popular and accessible ones receive heavy patronage, so a tent should always be carried in case a hut is full. Besides, snow camping is an integral part of ski touring, and by camping away from huts, you reduce your impact on the environment.

Hygiene can be a problem in huts. Gastric complaints have been far too common. If there is a toilet at the hut, use it. If not, defecate well away from any watercourse and the hut environs, and bury your calling card as deep as practical. Whilst hand-washing is an onerous task when your hands are cold, it should not be neglected. Never assume benches or hut utensils are clean,

because they are usually used as playing fields at night by our furry friends.

As this area is so large and high, it naturally produces a lot of water. River crossings, therefore, can be a problem, as snow bridges are not guaranteed on the large rivers which abound in the region. Many of the crossings require boots and socks to be removed (unless you want wet footwear), as well as trousers and, at times, even underwear. Stepping gingerly off toe-chilling snow, into water so close to freezing that the rivers may as well be glaciers, numbs the knees and has even been known to cause frost-nipped 'wedding tackle'.

On one icy crossing of the Tooma River, I had the misfortune of stubbing my toe and breaking it, but did not even realize until an hour later when my toe condescended to defrost.

For the cross country downhill freaks, this area may not have the instant gratification of the Main Range, where vertical height can be lost at a dizzying pace. But, for the connoisseur, there are bite-sized pieces which can tempt and titillate the Telemarker.

Mt Jagungal has plenty of runs to offer,

particularly her long, graceful South Face. The East Face of Grey Mare is steep, and both the Strumbo Range and Kerries offer enough 'yo-yoing' to turn the strongest pair of legs to jelly.

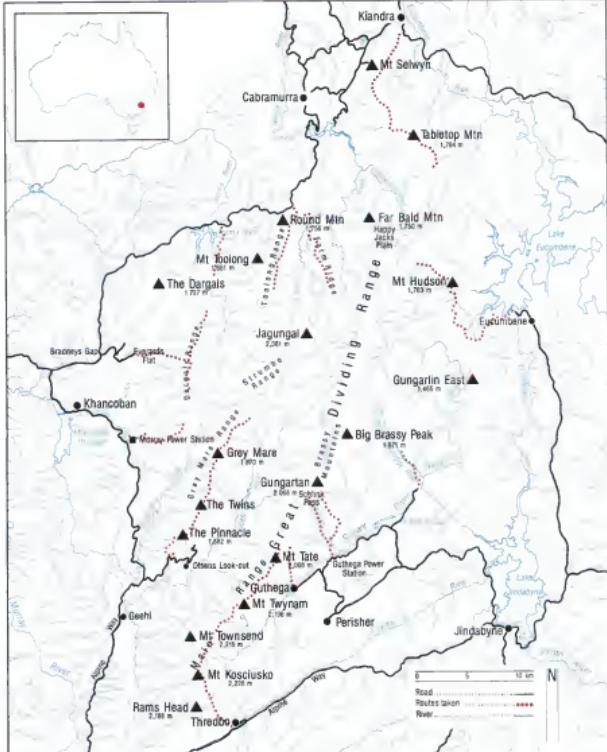
One advantage this area has over the Main Range is its lower altitude. When the Main Range is cloaked in cloud, with its snow wind-packed and crusty, the areas to the north and west can be beneath the cloud, with snow gums providing shelter from the wind.

The trees also add a special charm and provide wood for fires. However, many groups are advocating a 'no fires' policy, because of the damage wood collection and fires cause. Accordingly, stoves should be carried. In some areas,



The view to the distant Main Range from the Grey Mare Range—a suitable excuse for a rest, but then who needs an excuse? Tom Miller

## Northern Kosciusko National Park



particularly along ridges, water can be hard to find, so extra fuel should be carried for melting snow.

**Access.** By far the most popular way in to the area is from Guthega Power Station. The usual route is to follow the road up the Munyang valley to Schlink Pass. This offers a relatively easy climb, and is usually well protected. Alternatively, the aqueduct four-wheel-drive track can be followed up the east side of the valley and a route made up. Disappointment Spur, or the aqueduct followed back into the Munyang valley. Schlink Pass can also be gained via the Rolling Ground from either Guthega Dam or the Main Range.

By following an unmade road downstream from Island Bend, a track up the Burrungubuge River is reached. This offers access to the Brassy Mountains from the east.

Routes from the west offer plenty of scope for interesting trips, are little used, but usually require plenty of leg work. The trip up the Grey Mare Range is begun from the Olsens Look-out Road which leaves the Alpine Way three kilometres north of Geehi. There is usually a sign which says 'road closed'. Do not be dismayed, however, as this is displayed to deter non-skiers. A small quarry indicates the start of the Pinnacle Fire Trail.

There are two routes which give access to the southern end of the Dargals Range. The first alternative follows the old cattle

route through Everards Flat. The fire track leaves the Khancoban-Cabramurra Road at Bradneys Gap.

Three huge pipes coming down the hill toward Murray One Power Station, beside the Alpine Way, indicate the start of the second alternative. However, the road up, which leads to the Dargals Fire Trail, is locked, and is not nearly as direct as the pipes.

Unfortunately, the Khancoban-Cabramurra Road is closed during winter, although the Snowy Mountains Authority usually keeps the road open, for its own use, from Khancoban as far as Tooma Dam. A key to the gate at the southern end is available, but the Ranger at Khancoban does not hand it out willy-nilly, nor are vehicles permitted to stay overnight. The solution for most people who are not locals is to employ a driver, known to the Ranger, who will take you in and/or pick you up at a pre-arranged time. This means that there is access above the snow line, usually as far as Tooma Dam. The Ranger can tell you of suitable drivers and can be contacted by telephone on (060) 76 9373.

Northern access either follows the classic route from Kiandra or, alternatively, from Mt Selwyn ski area. Both ways give fast, easy access to Mt Tabletop.

Several routes exist in from the east, including four-wheel-drive tracks which lead into the Gungarlin River 'bite', which cuts into the Jagungal area so inappropriately. One route which could be useful in a good season is from Eucumbene up Happy Jacks Road, until high ground is gained. However, with a normal season this requires quite a walk.

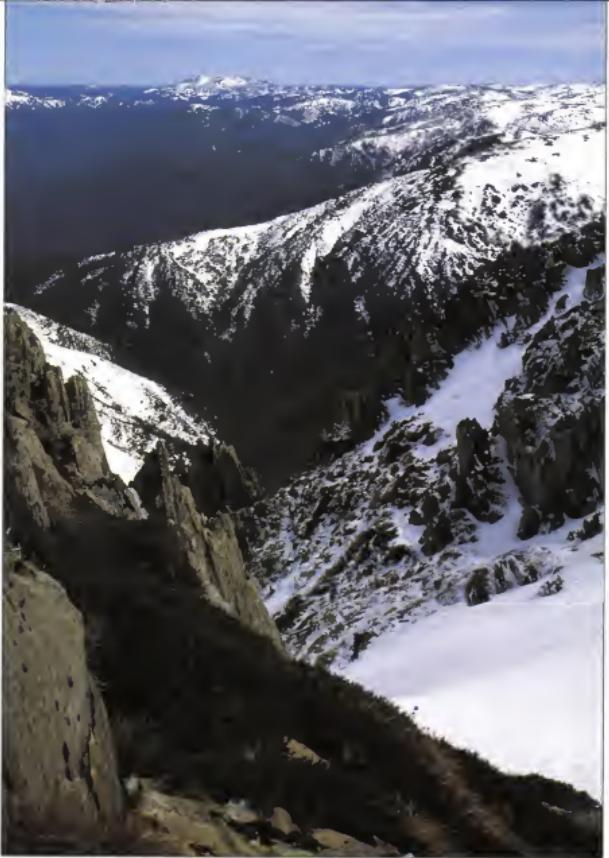
**Route guide.** This section is not intended as a comprehensive route guide. Rather, it is to give you a broad feeling for the principal routes. Of course it is possible to ski almost anywhere where there is sufficient snow, so study your maps and explore the intricacies of this wonderful area.

The Kerries offer ski touring *par excellence*. Mainly above the tree line, the ridge stretches from Gungartan (the area's highest peak) in the south, to the Valentine River in the north, and is the 'main drag' from Schlink Pass to Mt Jagungal.

The Brassy Mountains lie to the east and parallel to the Kerries. Part of the Great Dividing Range, this undulating area offers pleasant touring.

The Grey Mare Range is very much the smaller brother of the Main Range but, despite its relatively low altitude, it often has excellent snow. This is because it catches the snow-bearing westerlies first, and is protected from the snow-melting easterlies. Wonderful views of the Main Range may be had while traversing them. It should be noted that the hut marked to the south of Grey Hill on the 1:50,000 series map is a locked Snowy Mountains Authority hut. 'Grey Hill Cafe', which is unlocked, lies to the north of Grey Hill.

The Dargals Range is a lowish, mainly treed, ridge. It is probably best left for a good season, but with plenty of snow it is



*Mt Jagungal dominates the northern horizon in the view from Watsons Crags. Peter Sesterka*

the centre of a fascinating area. Pretty, Broadway and Snakey Plains are close at hand, as are the charismatic Wheelers and Pretty Plains Huts.

The Toolong Range and Farm Ridge offer similar travel, although Farm Ridge has an unfortunate ford of the Tumut River at its northern end. Travel is mainly along a treed ridge, interspersed with snow plains. At the southern end of the Toolong Range, Derschkos Hut, which is a SMA hut and by rights locked, has been broken into so many times it is now usually found open.

The route south from Tabletop Mountain offers several possibilities. Arsenic Ridge can be followed and Happy Jacks Plain crossed. In light snow conditions this involves quite a stroll with skis carried. Far Bald Mountain can be traversed to the west or, alternatively, the Great Dividing Range, incorporating the Munyang Range, can be followed to the east.

To continue south, you can follow either the high plateau country to the east of Mt Jagungal, or the fire track, which skirts round the west side of Mt Jagungal.

**Maps.** The Central Mapping Authority 1:50,000 series covers this area with a

high degree of readability and accuracy. Of most use are the Khancoban and Mount Kosciusko sheets, although if skiing from the north or east, adjoining sheets would be required.

National Mapping's 1:100,000 series also covers the area, but the larger scale of the CMA sheets make them a little obsolete.

Tim Lambie's *Mt Jagungal and the Brassy Mountains* (two inches to one mile, 1:31,680) is an excellent map and a favourite of mine.

S R Brookes of the Victorian Mountain Tramping Club has a sketch map of the *Round Mountain Area* (1:50,000), which covers areas to the north-west of Mt Jagungal which Tim Lambie's does not.

Algona Publications produces a map titled *Guthega Power Station, Whites River, Mt Jagungal*, which is a bit light on detail, but has some useful notes.

The Nordic Committee of the NSW Ski Association's *Mt Selwyn Ski Touring Map* (1:25,000) is good for the Kiandra, Mt Selwyn, Cabramurra and Tabletop Mountain area. ●

*Tom Millar* (see Contributors in Wild no 4) lives an 'outdoor life' in north-east Victoria. An experienced bushwalker, cross country skier and mountaineer, he has climbed and skied in New Zealand, Europe and the Himalayas.

# AN ALPINE TRAVERSE

*Harry Stephenson's previously unpublished account of a 1938 walk in the Victorian Alps from Mt Buller to Jamieson*

• THERE WERE SEVEN OF US IN THE party—Albert, 'Tiny', 'Toidy', Bill, 'Doug', Peter and myself, and our plans for the 1938 Easter trip were more ambitious than those for any previous trip of similar duration.

From Buller Creek, we were to climb Mt Buller, traverse Little Buller and descend to the Howqua River, climb the Bluff and continue across Eagles Peaks to the Governors and then, without the assistance of map, notes or knowledge of the route, follow a watershed between the Howqua and Jamieson waters into Jamieson.

We left Melbourne at 10.15 pm on Thursday and, after a halt for supper at Yea, arrived at the Delatite Timber Mill at 3.15 on Good Friday morning. Spreading our sleeping bags on a pile of sawdust, we slept till daybreak.

As we were packing, the morning mists lifted and revealed the summit of Mt Buller, angular and forbidding; a wedge of rock stabbing the blue sky.

We took the track up Long Spur and passed through a number of patches of burning scrub; burning because irresponsible timber millers choose to wantonly destroy the virgin growth on the hills; burning because the government department in whose hands the safe keeping of these mountains is vested, is unmindful of the very real dangers of bushfires, landslides, silt-ing-up of rivers and the consequent flooding. (Sounds familiar! Editor) We climbed steadily along a track that was familiar to me, and reached the Mt Buller Hut for lunch.

I like the situation of the Mt Buller Hut better than any other hut I have visited. From the front door you can watch the clouds scudding across the rocky summit



*On the rocky crest of Little Buller before plunging down Eight Mile Spur to the Howqua River. Harry Stephenson*

of Mt Buller; a side window looks out across the attractive yet little-known Bullock Ranges and, through a tiny window above the top bunks, Mt Cobbler and Mt Stirling can be seen. After lunch we climbed across snow plains and then over rocks to the summit, to be rewarded with a view that included more bushfires than I had ever seen. The biggest blaze was on the side of Mt Warrambat (Mt Timbertop) and there were others along the Howqua, up the Eight Mile valley, on the slopes of Mt Stirling and several in the Delatite valley. Coincidence had little to do with the fires, unless it was a coincidence that they were all blazing

immediately after the cattlemen had mustered their cattle and driven them down from their high pastures! Leaving the top, we made our way past Kofler Hut towards Little Buller. Patches of snow plain were interspersed with clumps of old gnarled snow gums, and our pace was slowed considerably.

The West Ridge, which leads down from Mt Buller to Mt Timbertop, could be seen to advantage and more than one pair of eyes dwelt longingly on the jagged teeth of rock. It reminded me of the spur that runs down from Mt MacLeod to Eurobin, although that North Buffalo spur is not nearly so impressive. A short climb over loose rocks brought us to the summit of Little Buller and afforded us a splendid view of the Howqua valley. Below us

somewhere was the clearing at Eight Mile, and we were faced with a descent which had possibly not previously been attempted and which, at best, looked problematical. The way down the spur commenced with a ten metre cliff that had to be skirted. Then followed some of the roughest going I have ever encountered.



*On the Bluff.* Michael Collier. **Right,** the craggy summit of Eagles Peaks is one of the most dramatic in the Victorian Alps. Chris Baxter. **Far right,** Mt McDonald viewed from the Bluff. Baxter

Descents as steep as 30°, and occasional pitches of 45° were intermixed with easier slopes that were covered with loose rocks—shattered boulders which had crashed down from the ridge above. The ridge itself was impossible to follow and we made fair progress along the slopes about 100 metres below the crest. But for the fact that the afternoon was drawing to a close, we could have spent several hours more in this wilderness of rock.

Just above the tree line, the rocks gave way to a gentle earth-covered slope which dropped away towards the river. Reaching the last rocky outcrop, I sat down to wait for the others who were some distance behind. It was now late afternoon and glancing up the Howqua valley I could see the cliff faces of the Square Gin Face and Mt Magdala. A thin haze lent an air of softness to the gaunt cliffs which glowed in the rays of the setting sun. It was a mountain view to rank amongst the best I have experienced.

In failing light we continued over easier ground and entered a belt of scrub and, in another half hour, reached the river. The water was so low that even in the darkness we were able to cross on rocks without wetting our boots.

Reaching the track on the other side, we were confronted with the problem of deciding whether the Eight Mile clearing was up- or downstream. Leaving the others, Albert and I turned upstream and



followed the track for about three kilometres before retracing our steps. In the bright moonlight, our little stroll was quite enjoyable even though it followed a very hard day. In our absence the others had found the clearing about a kilometre downstream and when we rejoined them tea was being prepared. Mt Buller, an old friend, and Little Buller, a new favourite, had given us a marvellous day.

The Eight Mile Creek had ceased to flow and as we crossed it next morning, we had misgivings about the possibility of obtaining water when we reached the ridge above. The track to the Bluff was very indistinct, but the way up the spur was obvious. The climb, although steep, was full of interest for, looking back, glorious views of the Little Buller spur and the Mt Buller-Mt Stirling divide rewarded us.

Unfortunately the solid going of the previous day followed by the morning's climb was having its effect on the party and, shortly before the crest of the divide was reached, Tiny decided against continuing and announced his intention of returning to the Howqua and spending an easy couple of days. Toidy, too, was not at his best and he returned with Tiny.

The remaining five of us soon finished the climb and, finding a shady patch of grass, we rested for lunch. We were without water and, under the circum-

stances, the pickled onions we ate, covered with a mysterious pattern of green spots, were hardly the best thirst quenchers. The sky was beginning to cloud over and gave promise of a change in the weather. After lunch we left our

**WE** raced along at top speed as neither of us had ever seen a more wicked sky.

packs in a prominent position and set off to visit the Bluff. A good track led us over a knob and gave us our first view of this amazing mountain. A more striking and impressive view of cliff faces rising in steps one above the other would be hard to imagine, and from the position from which we viewed the Bluff it certainly looked austere and impregnable. I doubt whether anyone, on viewing the North Face of the Bluff for the first time, would



lacks the charm of the approach to Mt MacLeod), but because the summit plain and the immediate surroundings are attractive.

We were back at our packs in half an hour. The sky had become very overcast and threatening. The wind had reached hurricane force and roared through the tree-tops above our heads. We shouldered our packs and continued along the ridge towards a saddle where we hoped the others had found water. We had only two kilometres to go, but we raced along at top speed as neither of us had ever seen a more wicked sky. It had now become brown with a mixture, as we later learned, of red Mallee dust and smoke from the surrounding bushfires. Above the howl of

hail the size of moth-balls—then it stopped completely. No rain followed.

The fire had barely managed to remain alight and we set about rebuilding it. Peter and Bill, of course, were still away looking for water and now had the unenviable task of returning through wet scrub.

The Queensland tent was still lying on the ground and in its folds were large pools of melting hail and water, all a brownish color due to the red dust. By careful manipulation, we were able to fill every billy and suitable utensil with water from the tent and, as the fire had by this time resumed its gigantic proportions, we were not long in brewing a billy of tea.

At the opportune moment, Peter and Bill returned, drenched, bedraggled but with



attempt the climb. Albert, however, had previously descended by the face which we proposed to climb, so we took his word for it. The sky had now become very overcast and rather than chance being caught on the Bluff in a storm, Peter, Doug and Bill decided to leave Albert and I, and return to their packs. We promised to return in two hours and in that time the three volunteered to search for water and erect the tents.

Albert and I set off down a steep slope and soon reached the saddle from which the spur to the Bluff commenced. A maze of fallen timber and scrub checked our progress, but once clear of this we began to climb at a steady pace. The way led over steep sloping patches of snow grass and, at close quarters, the cliffs proved to have gullies leading through them. We ascended a series of giant steps, and an hour after leaving our friends, Albert and I reached the top of the Bluff.

A strong wind had sprung up, but we visited the very rugged western end of the mountain before leaving the top. Twenty minutes was all that we could spend before descending, but in that short time I saw enough to realize that the Bluff is one of the finest mountains in the State; not so much for the view (although on all sides an extensive panorama of rugged mountains is to be seen), or for the approach (which although very impressive

the wind, the low rumbling of thunder could be heard, and the very air seemed charged with a tension as though the suspense of waiting for the elements to unleash the storm was too much to endure. Albert and I had but one thought—to be snugly camped when the rain did come.

We reached the saddle to find that the others had arrived only ten minutes before us. We selected our tent sites carefully then I set about building a fire. Bill and Peter volunteered to follow a gully down in a search for water, and Doug and Albert wrestled with a refractory 'Queensland model' tent. There was an abundance of dead timber and in a short time I built it into a pyramid three metres square and two metres high. Turning to the tent pitchers, I was about to offer some advice when the storm broke. A shattering peal of thunder reverberated and re-echoed through the hills, lightning flashed across the whole sullen sky and was followed almost immediately by more thunder than a torrential downpour of hail. We sat on a log beside the fire, sheltering as best we could beneath our waterproof sheets. (The erected tents had been hurriedly filled with rucksacks, food and clothing.) For perhaps five minutes the hail continued—

the water and still smiling. It was impossible to approach within three metres of the fire and from this distance our clothes were soon dry. Tea was cooked in billies which were advanced towards the fire on long sticks, and soon the short storm was forgotten. We had scarcely finished eating, however, when another roll of thunder and vivid flash of lightning ushered a second downpour of hail, this time of even greater severity than the first. Throwing several big logs on the fire, more to protect it than in the hope that they would burn, we crouched once more under our groundsheets and watched a vivid display of lightning. For perhaps five minutes we waited while the hail rattled on our groundsheets, thunder rolled and crashed like the detonations of some heavy artillery and the fire hissed and steamed in protest as it struggled to remain alight. Suddenly, there was quiet. The last peal of thunder rolled away, the hail ceased and the wind died away completely. We rekindled the fire and as we gathered around the blaze a thick mist descended on the hills. Then, in the silence and stillness that accompanies a dense fog, we retired to bed.

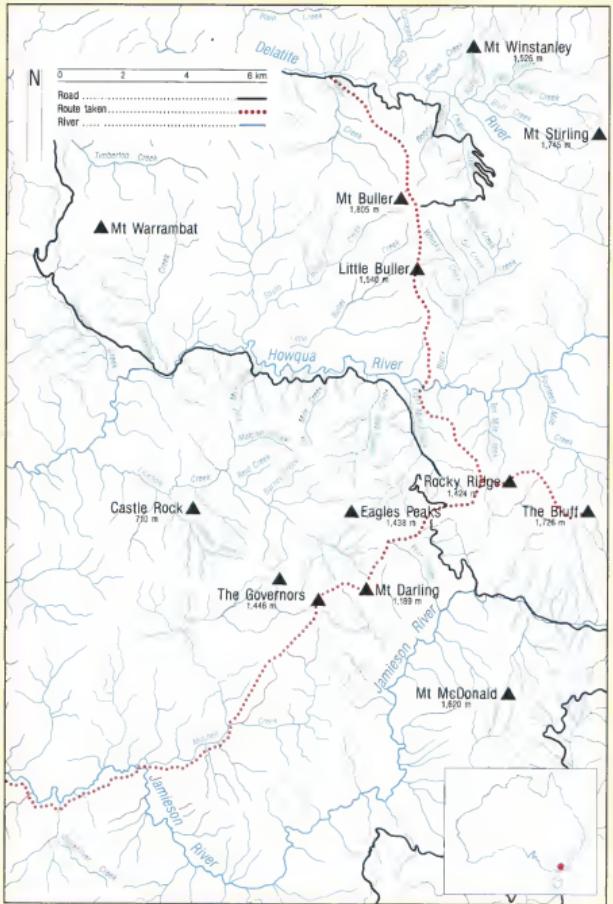
I remember being wakened an hour or so later, by the noise of the wind howling

through the tree-tops and the rain beating heavily on the walls of my tiny tent. I think I must have smiled, for it is a grand sensation to lie in a warm sleeping bag and listen to the rain and the wind as, not 15 centimetres away, it buffets the sides of a well-pitched tent. And then, safe in the knowledge that the elements could not harm me, I slept once more.

By morning the rain had gone but the wind blew as viciously as ever. We breakfasted, packed and by 9 am were on our way.

Twenty minutes along the crest of the windy ridge brought us to the foot of Eagles Peaks. It was bitterly cold, and we welcomed the warming effect of the hard climb to the summit. To the north Mt Buller was under cloud, but across the Jamieson and at no great distance, Mt McDonald presented an imposing and attractive bulk.

## Mt Buller to Jamieson



Ahead were the Governors and between us was a deeper saddle then we had wished for.

Choosing a sheltered position behind some rocks we rested, but an attempt to divide a block of chocolate met with only partial success. All attempts to break the chocolate only succeeded in chipping flakes from the rock! The descent from the top of Eagles Peaks afforded some measure of excitement for it is steeper and more difficult than any section of the Croscut Saw or the Cathedral Range. Over the steeper parts we had to face inwards and clamber down on hands and knees, while from the safer ledges we sent dozens of huge boulders bouncing down the mountain side.

There are two saddles between Eagles Peaks and the Governors, and in the first of them we stopped for lunch. So

interesting, impressive and rugged had the ridge been, that the morning had been spent in covering about five kilometres. We were without water for lunch, but the wind had been so cold during the morning that we lit a fire for its warmth alone.

A short rise and descent brought us to the saddle at the foot of the Governors, and in it we came upon a large oval area that had been burnt very recently and a number of fresh axe-marks along what appeared to be a recently cut track. All efforts to follow the track in either direction, however, proved fruitless. We

**THE** wettest, saddest and most dejected-looking party I have ever seen splashed their way to the front door and timidly entered.

made a very thorough search, for we had heard there was a route by which cattle were driven from the Howqua valley to Weirs Hut on the Jamieson. (Several months later we learned that the cattlemen have no track; they merely ascend a valley from the Howqua to the saddle where we found the blazes, and then follow a valley down into the Jamieson. The infrequency of their visits makes a regular track unnecessary.)

The climb of the Governors was steep, but was soon over and the view, while not as extensive as that from Eagles Peaks or the Bluff, was very valuable to us. The Great Divide between Mt Skene and Mt McDonald could be seen clearly, and we had a good view of Sunday Spur dropping into the Jamieson valley. Although its foot was hidden by the nearer hills, I was able to judge the position of Hosken's clearing. From the Governors, we had a choice of two spurs which seemed to form the valley of a branch of Mitchell's Creek, and both appeared to end quite close to the hidden Hosken's clearing.

We had only about three hours of daylight in which to reach a campsite for the night, so we selected the shorter spur and set off for Hosken's. The spur proved to be very open and provided easy going. A few kilometres along we were cheered by the sight of Hosken's clearing and, with the aid of field-glasses, we could see the pine trees which are a feature of the clearing.

The wind was still very strong and the sky had clouded over. We hastened on, having no wish to be caught in a rain-

storm. We reached the foot of the spur at about 4 pm and, as rain began to fall, we crossed a small creek before climbing round the foot of another spur to reach the main valley of Mitchell Creek. We pushed through scrub for a short distance and then came upon a very old and overgrown track which led us in a few hundred metres to Hosken's old homestead.

We were greeted on arrival by Mick McCutcheon and his party, who had been to Mt Skene. We were a little surprised to find that the Melbourne Walking Club party which had been to Mt McDonald had not arrived and, as it soon began to rain very heavily, we assumed (correctly) that they were in for a very wet night. For some unknown reason Mick had selected the old kitchen, the roof of which was in a very bad state of disrepair. We walked through to the old, but very comfortable, dining room.

Next morning we had scarcely finished breakfast (it was still raining) when the wettest, saddest and most dejected-looking party I have ever seen splashed their way to the front door and timidly entered. The walking club party had arrived. They had camped at Wrens Flat on the Jamieson River and the heavy rain, in addition to preventing them from cooking either tea or breakfast, had penetrated most of their tents. Probably recalling the previous Easter, when in a deluge at Eight Mile he had been the only one in a party of 30 to remain dry for a night, Albert grinned. And, still grinning in the inimitable Aird style, he took his life in his hands with the remark, 'That's what happens when you blokes go away in the bush!'

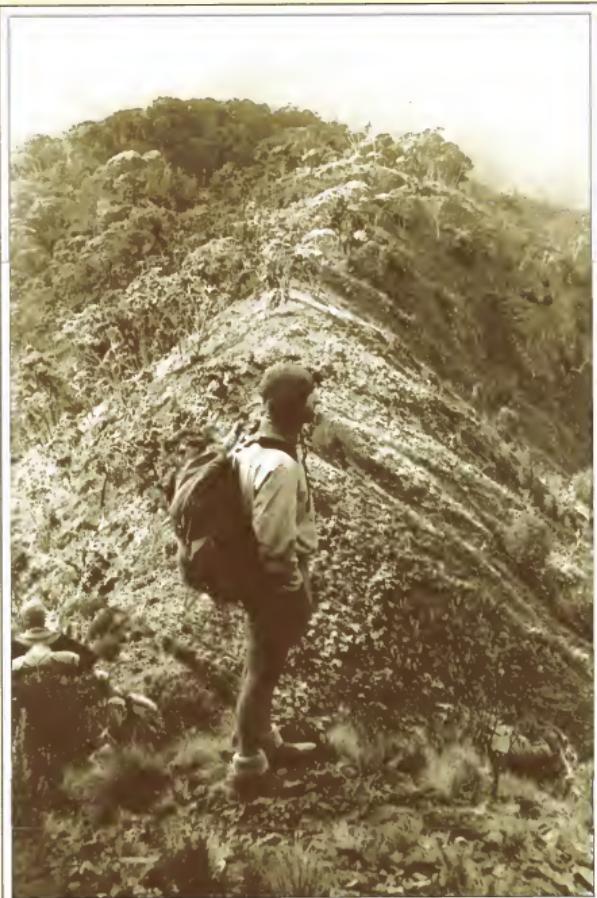
We built up the fire, made some more tea and helped them to dry their wet clothes. An hour later the rain had stopped and we set off on the 30 kilometre stage to Sutcliffe's, where our car would be waiting for us.

We crossed the Jamieson River at the Mitchell Creek junction and followed the old mining track, which was familiar to me. The 12 kilometres to the old quicksilver mine passed quickly and we stopped for lunch. The afternoon was cold and showery and we set off at a brisk pace along the old mining track. Although the track is picturesque in parts, it is, generally speaking, much inferior to the Howqua valley track. The Jamieson River is too far below the track for the rapids and rock pools to be appreciated. We lost nothing, therefore, in hurrying.

The sun broke through the clouds for the first time during the day as we neared the end of the road at Sutcliffe's home.

On arrival in Mansfield, we were a little surprised at not finding Tiny and Toody outside the garage, where we had arranged to meet them. All enquiries drew a blank, and absence of news from Merrijig made it almost certain that they had not yet reached there.

By this time our car was ready to leave for Melbourne and Albert and I untied our packs and hired a car to take us to



*The 1938 party on the well-defined ridge running from the Bluff to Eagles Peaks. Note the A-frame packs.*  
Harry Stephenson

Merrijig, from where we would immediately walk out to Fry's. Failing news from Fry's, we planned to continue up the Howqua to Eight Mile and climb back to where we had left them on Saturday. The engines of both cars were running, one going to Melbourne and the other to Merrijig, when the garage phone rang. It was Tiny calling from Jamieson!

After leaving us on Saturday the two returned to Eight Mile and, making towards Fry's, camped for the night at about Three Mile. The hail storm that hit us when we were below the Bluff caught them, and they abandoned their tent and packs and walked to Fry's for the night. Next morning they returned, packed up and retraced their steps to Fry's. Having recovered from their indisposition of Saturday morning, and having two days at

their disposal, they took the advice of one of the Frys and attempted to cut 'across country' to Hosken's homestead. The directions they received proved misleading, and the heavy rainstorm through which we sheltered at Hosken's caught them in some very thick scrub in a creek valley. They spent an uncomfortable night and at 1 pm on Monday reached Hosken's, just as we were lunching at the quicksilver mine. They followed us down the Jamieson and even though we had to wait for an hour and a half for our car, they failed by an hour to catch us. They had obtained a lift into Jamieson from the Sutcliffes, but in order to get to Mansfield they would have to wait until after a dance that was being held in Jamieson that night. ●

Harry Stephenson (see Contributors in Wild no 16) has been bushwalking since 1928 and recently turned to trekking in the Himalayas. He is the author and publisher of a number of well-known books including *Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains* and *Skiing the High Plains*.

## Wild Bushwalking



Last year John and Monica Chapman travelled Australia in search of our finest walks. This is their selection

# THE Big Walks

• FOR SUCH A FLAT CONTINENT, AUSTRALIA HAS some remarkable bushwalking areas for those prepared to travel. Most bushwalkers explore their own State but seldom visit other areas. Tasmania is perhaps the exception as it has become a Mecca for many Australian bushwalkers. However, there are good walks elsewhere which are well worth the effort to get to them. The walks suggested here are our favourites, based on our travels to all States last year. They cover a broad range of landscapes and conditions, and each walk has its own individual character. This survey does not necessarily represent the best walks to be found in Australia. Rather, they are a worthwhile representation of our country. As much as possible, car shuttles have been avoided in selecting the routes described, and public transport is mentioned where access by it is possible.

## The Overland Track

TASMANIA

• THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY AUSTRALIA'S BEST-known walking track and it thoroughly deserves this honour. The Overland Track traverses the length of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park in central Tasmania. This park includes some of the most interesting and varied landforms to be found in our country. Waterfalls, gorges, cliffs, lakes, craggy peaks, tall forests and alpine moors are mixed together to tempt explorers. Its greatest attraction is, for many bushwalkers, its greatest deterrent—it's superabundance of water. The ground is saturated and there are copious quantities of mud, but without water the magnificent waterfalls, lakes and streams of the region would not exist. The weather is extremely variable, ranging from scorching fire-ban days to summer blizzards. Equipment must be suitable for coping with both of these extremes. Many bushwalkers rely too heavily on the extensive hut system, and tragedies have occurred as a result.

The track is not a circuit but a through-walk

of 80 kilometres. It can be walked in five days, but it is highly recommended to allow seven to ten days. This allows time to explore many of the interesting features that are located close to the main track system. The tracks are well marked with signposts at all major junctions. It is best to walk from north to south, as the most exposed sections of the track are then crossed in the first few days. This is also the more popular direction; and walking 'with the traffic' will reduce the number of walkers you meet. This track is very popular and over Christmas and New Year has up to 1,000 walkers on it at once! The best chance of good weather is during late summer, and naturally this is the most popular time for bushwalking. If you prefer fewer people then walk this track in autumn. Our favourite month is April, when the autumn colours are splashed across the slopes and heavy frosts line the track in the mornings. It is cold then, but the colours and lack of other walkers more than compensate.

For bushwalking in any month of the year good equipment is needed. All parties should have tents and stoves. Full wet-weather clothing is essential at all times of the year. Permits are required for walking the Overland Track and the present fee is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child.

During summer, access by public transport to both ends of the track is good. From Devonport, Staffords Coaches, telephone (004) 24 3628, runs a daily bus service to Cradle Valley for \$22 per person. From Launceston, Mountain Stage Line, telephone (003) 34 0442, runs a service on most days to Cradle Valley for \$25 per person. From Cynthia Bay, at the southern end of the park, Mountain Stage Line operates a daily bus during summer direct to Launceston for \$20 per person. Redline Coaches, telephone (002) 34 4577, operates a regular bus service all year from Monday to Saturday from Hobart to Queenstown. This bus passes through Derwent Bridge, six kilometres south of Cynthia Bay. The fare to Hobart is \$15 per person.

Information about the Overland Track is readily available. Brief notes are printed on the back of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park map. More detailed information on the tracks and the park are to be found in the guidebook Cradle Mountain National Park by John Slesman and John Chapman. A suggested itinerary is given here but it must be

noted that any plans are often altered or thwarted by Tasmania's fickle weather. Very rarely have any of our visits to this track followed the intended schedule. Some of the events which modified our plans were heavy snowfall on the



The autumn splendour of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. Above, a tarn in Waterfall Valley. Left, Cradle Mountain from Mt Campbell. All uncredited photos John & Monica Chapman

Windermere Plains, a 3 am flooding at Frog Flats (not the best place for a dry night's sleep!), strong winds blowing across Cradle Cirque, a raging Kia-Ora Creek, and helping poorly equipped walkers to get out safely.

If circumstances allow an itinerary to be followed, the following suggested route is most rewarding. The first day's walk is to Waterfall Valley, climbing Cradle Mountain on the way. Next day is an easy stroll to Windermere Hut, visiting Lake Will and Innes Falls as a side trip. The third day's walk is to Pelion Hut. Pelion is an excellent area to spend an extra day, and an ascent of Mt Oakleigh is highly recommended. From Pelion Hut to Kia-Ora Hut is an easy

day's walk, and Mt Ossa, the highest peak in Tasmania, can be visited as a side trip if the weather is suitable. From Kia-Ora Hut the track passes through high forest close to several waterfalls then continues on to Windy Ridge Hut, a good place for an overnight stop. These waterfalls are a must, particularly after heavy rainfall. From Windy Ridge the main Overland Track is left to walk to Pine Valley Hut. After lunch, the Acropolis can be climbed for spectacular views of the southern half of the park. Next morning a visit to the Labyrinth is recommended. (If the party has some spare time it is worth while camping up in the Labyrinth so as to explore it more fully.) From Pine Valley it is a half-day walk to Narcissus Hut. A launch operates on Lake St Clair and this can be called up with the aid of the radio located in the hut. It is more interesting, however, to walk to Cynthia Bay. There are two routes and the more varied one is over Byron Gap and past Lake Petrich to Cynthia Bay. Cynthia Bay has a kiosk, cheap hostel-type accommodation (see the Ranger) and lots of hot showers.

Map: *Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park*, 1:100,000, topographic. Published by the Tasmanian Lands Department, 134 Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tas 7000. •

## Western Arthurs Traverse

T A S M A N I A

• THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST SPECTACULAR walk in Australia. It is one of the most rugged and interesting ranges in Tasmania and contains over 30 lakes. A spectacular route winds its way along the crest of the range and this traverse has become a classic walk in South-west Tasmania. It is highly recommended for experienced bushwalkers. The weather is variable and in summer ranges from hot days to cold, windy blizzards. Most walkers visit the range in summer and early autumn when the weather is at its mildest. For those seeking a challenge, the range is cold and wet in winter, with slushy snow on the peaks and in the gullies.

The route through this range has become easy to follow but it is still a very slow, rough walk. Numerous steep gullies have to be negotiated and a rope may be needed for pack-hauling and as a safety line in wet weather. All parties must be well equipped, and good tents, stoves, full wet-weather clothing and good solid footwear are essential. Sleeping bags should be suitable for use down to at least freezing level. Firewood is becoming non-existent at many of the campsites and sufficient fuel for the entire trip should be carried. A water bottle is needed for drinking water. Detailed track notes are to be found in *South West Tasmania* by John Chapman. The *Old River* map is necessary but shows little detail of the actual traverse route.

The Western Arthurs are situated 90 kilometres south-west of Hobart. From Hobart, the Strathgordon Road is followed west for 121 kilometres to Frodshams Pass, then the Scotts Peak Road is followed south to the car-park at the end of the road. During summer, access by public transport is excellent with a bushwalkers' bus service operating each Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. This is operated by Bushwalkers Transport, telephone (002) 34 2226

all hours, and leaves Hobart at 9.30 am from 28 Criterion Street. Permits are not required for walking in this range but it is suggested that all parties register with the Tasmanian Police in Hobart. Itineraries vary greatly as the weather is very unpredictable. The range can be walked in six days in perfect weather but allow between nine and twelve days for the round trip. Even with this time allowance, many parties have epics and are washed off the range each summer. Whatever the weather, a visit to this range is a challenging and memorable experience.

From Scotts Peak Dam follow the Port Davey Track south for half a day's walk to camp near Junction Creek. Next morning follow the Port Davey Track west then climb Moraine A to the top of the Western Arthurs. An easy walk leads over Mt Hesperus to Lake Cygnus. The third day's walking is an easy day to Lake Oberon and allows some time to scale some of the crags if the weather permits. This is our favourite campsite as it is surrounded by jagged peaks and is in a splendid setting. The next day is over the steep peak of Mt Pegasus, then over Mt Capricorn and on to High Moor to camp. A complex route leads east through the Begarry Bumps and then along a crested ridge over Mt Taurus to the muddy campsites at Haven Lake. A short day then follows to the exposed campsites beside Promontory Lake. The last day on the range is missed by many parties as they descend the easy spur of Moraine K to the Arthur Plains. This day is long but interesting and follows the ridges east over West Portal to campsites at Lake Rosanne. From this beautiful lake descend the ridges north-east to the Arthur Plains. Cross the plains then follow the Arthur Plains Track west to Junction Creek. The last day is the walk back to Scotts Peak Dam to meet the transport. Extra days will almost certainly be required and the weather will finally decide how much is achieved.

Map: *Old River*, 1:100,000, topographic. Published by the Tasmanian Lands Department, 134 Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tas 7000. •

bus service runs from Monday to Friday from Albury to Mt Beauty. This is run by Pyles Coaches, telephone (057) 57 2024, and, as the service varies, they should be contacted before arranging a bus or train to Albury. From Mt Beauty to Bogong Village (the start of the walk) is 16 kilometres, and a taxi or minibus can be



Walking through alpine scrub near the Niggesheads, Bogong High Plains. Right, above Lake Oberon amidst the rugged grandeur of the Western Arthurs.

hired from Pyles for this section if required. If arriving by private vehicle late at night, it is best to stop at Mt Beauty as camping is not allowed near Bogong Village. Information on walks in this area is widely available. The guidebook *Bogong National Park* by John Siseman is highly recommended. There is a multitude of maps and most are suitable as walking is mainly confined to the tracks and snow-pole

## The Big Walks



1 The Overland Track, 2 Western Arthurs, 3 Bogong High Plains, 4 Razor and Viking, 5 Little River Gorge, 6 Snowy Mountains, 7 Budawangs, 8 Blue Gum Forest, 9 Fraser Island, 10 Ormiston Gorge, 11 Stirling Ranges

lines. There are many huts scattered across the plains which are open for bushwalkers to use. Parties must not rely on these, however, as they are very popular and may be fully occupied. No permits are required for bushwalking in the park. Camping is freely allowed except near the Falls Creek Alpine Village.

The suggested circuit requires six days to complete and can easily be varied to suit the party. From Bogong Village follow the fire tracks

## High Plains Circuit

V I C T O R I A

• THESE PLAINS FORM THE HIGHEST REGION IN Victoria and provide very pleasant alpine walking. The plains are open and can readily be crossed in all directions. A large variety of walks is possible in this area. In our opinion the best walk is to circle round the edge of the plains then ascend Mt Bogong, Victoria's highest peak. This is a long easy walk with pleasant views over the haze-covered ridges of the high country.

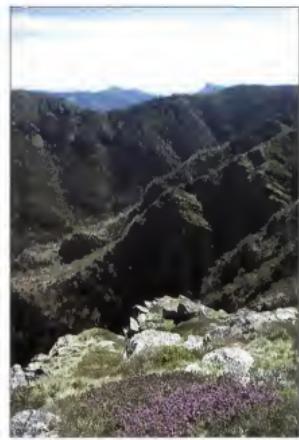
The Bogong High Plains are situated 180 kilometres north-east of Melbourne. The plains are an elevated plateau covered with low vegetation featuring lovely snow gums. It is surrounded by deep river valleys filled with tall mixed forests. Most walking in the area is above the tree line, with excellent views in fine weather. Late spring, summer and autumn are the best seasons for walking. The weather is then generally fine and pleasant. In winter the area is covered with snow, providing excellent skiing. All walkers need to be well equipped as snowfalls can occur even in mid-summer.

Access by public transport is reasonable. A



west to the Springs Saddle then north over Mt Fainter and Mt Niggerheath to Tawonga Huts for the first night. Next day follow the pole line south past Mt Jim then east past Mt Bundarra and Mt Cope to Wallaces Hut. The third day follow the pole lines north over Mt Nelse to Ropers Hut. On the fourth day descend the Duane Spur then climb the T spur to Cleve Col Hut. On the fifth day ascend Mt Bogong and then continue past the West Peak and descend Quartz Ridge to Bogong Creek Saddle to camp. Fast parties can continue to Bogong Village. For the final day the vehicle tracks can be followed west into the valley. Follow an aqueduct and then saddle north to Bogong Village at the end of the walk. Alternatively, for the last day, climb south-west through the scrub on to Mt Arthur and descend steeply south-west down Black Possum Spur to Bogong Village. A general store is located in this village, but closes at 5 pm daily.

Maps: *Bogong High Plains and Adjacent Peaks*, 1:63,360, sketch map. Published by Algoa Guides, 16 Charles Street, Northcote, Vic 3070. *Falls Creek Mt Hotham No 1*, 1:50,000, topographic. Published by David Rowlands and available in Melbourne bushwalking shops. *Trappers Creek, Nelse, Fainter*, 1:25,000, topographic. Published by the Victorian Division of Survey and Mapping, and available from 318 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000. ●



The view from Mt Howitt over the Crosscut Saw to the Razor, left, and the Viking. **Upper right**, Pigeon House Mountain peeping over Budawangs cliffs. **Lower right**, the main falls in the Little River Gorge. **Far right**, on the Kermies, Mt Jagungal area, Chris Baxter (last photo only)

## Razor-Viking Circuit

VICTORIA

● THE MT HOWITT AREA OF THE VICTORIAN Alps provides some of the best walking to be found in that State. Deep valleys, razorback ridges and spectacular peaks are the main attractions. The Crosscut Saw, Mt Speculation,

the Razor and the Viking are features well known to local bushwalkers and worth exploring. It is one of our favourite walking areas in our home State. The area is situated 130 kilometres north-east of Melbourne, near the Mt Buller ski resort. From Melbourne follow the road through Mansfield towards Mt Buller. Turn left at Merimbah and drive up to the Stirling Circuit Road. Turn right and follow the circuit road, then descend to the Howqua valley and drive to the foot of Howitt Spur at the start of the walk. All access is by private transport only.

The area is reserved within the Wonnangatta-Moroka National Park and no permits are required for bushwalking. The area is very well mapped with the Brookes map *Watersheds of the King, Howqua, and Jamieson Rivers* being most useful for bushwalking. The guidebook *Wonnangatta-Moroka National Park* by John Siseman covers this area with good track notes. Late spring to early autumn is the best period to attempt this walk. In winter, parts of this walk are covered with deep snow. Most of this route is on tracks except for the route off the Viking into the Wonnangatta valley and the ascent to Macalister Springs.

This circuit requires four days. Starting from the foot of Howitt Spur follow the road north up onto Stanley's Name Spur and climb east up this spur onto the Crosscut Saw. Follow this ridge north over Mt Buggery to the campsite on the northern side of Mt Speculation. Next day walk east over Mt Despair and up on to the Razor. Descend south to camp in the saddle between the Razor and the Viking. (Water may not be available at this campsite, particularly after a dry period.) On the third day climb up over the Viking and follow the untracked spur southwards into the Wonnangatta valley. Cross the river (camp can be made here) and follow an old track uphill to meet the Zeka Track. Follow this west then follow the old closed roads to Macalister Springs (the alternative third night campsite). Walk west over the summit of Mt Howitt and descend steeply west down Howitt Spur to the vehicles at the end of the walk.

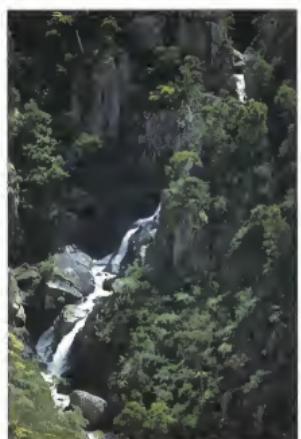
Map: *Watersheds of the King, Howqua, and Jamieson Rivers*, 1:50,000, contoured. Published by S R Brookes, 5 Quantock Street, Canterbury, Vic 3126. ●

## Little River Gorge

VICTORIA

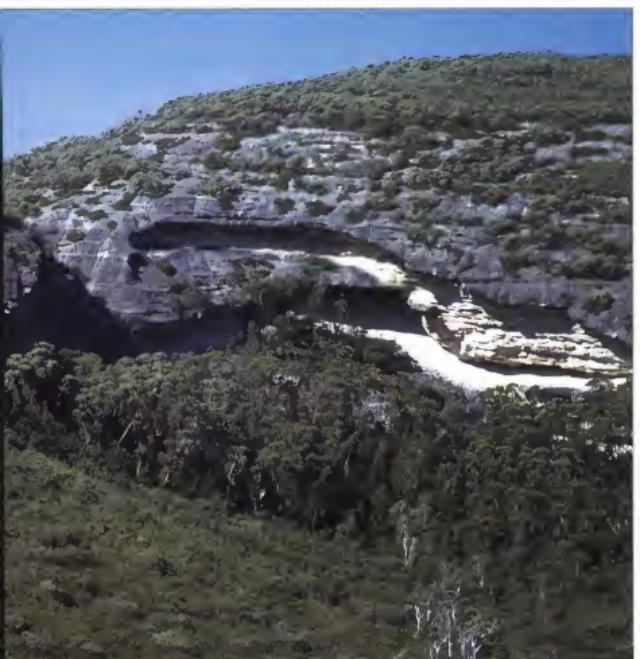
● IN EASTERN VICTORIA THERE ARE SOME STEEP narrow gorges which fall into the Snowy River. The deepest of these is that formed by the Little River. This gorge has many waterfalls and is rimmed by high cliffs. A trip through the gorge requires steep scrambling and possibly some rope work but it provides an exciting, and at times dangerous, walk which is an unforgettable experience.

The gorge is 100 kilometres north-east of Bairnsdale in East Gippsland. Access is by private transport only. From Gippsland follow the roads north through Buchan to Wulguruang Junction. Turn right on to the road to Bonang and follow this for eight kilometres to the Little River. No permits are required for this walk. All party members should be able to abseil, and a rope and appropriate equipment is needed for this. Most groups visit the gorge in summer and autumn when the river is hardly



flowing. In winter the stream is very high and dangerous. In spring there is plenty of water in the gorge and it is very spectacular, but can be dangerous and under these conditions is only suggested to very experienced parties. Campsites are very restricted and groups should have a maximum of three tents.

The gorge can be walked all the way to the Snowy River as a two- or three-day walk, but this requires a car shuffle and the lower section is less interesting. The other route given can be walked in two days if the river is low. If the river has a reasonable flow it may require three



days to complete this walk. Start where the road crosses the river and follow the track down to the foot of the waterfall near the road. Walk downstream through untracked bush following the west bank of the stream past several waterfalls. After three kilometres the river enters a rocky gorge and it is necessary to descend into this rocky slot to continue. The river soon sweeps right between cliffs and plummets into the valley below. If the stream is almost dry it is possible to abseil down the river bed to a terrace in the waterfall. (Another route to this terrace is to climb high over the bluff on the right and descend a narrow slot.) Scramble off left and descend steeply to the foot of the falls. If the stream is flowing the route across the terrace is too dangerous. It is necessary to climb 30 metres up on to the east wall (the easiest way up is 150 metres upstream) and traverse round above the cliff to a ramp which leads down very steeply back towards the falls. Abseil or scramble down the ramp to the base of the cliff and descend steeply to the foot of the waterfall.

The valley can then be followed downstream for a kilometre to its junction with Wulguruang Creek. It is worth climbing up the valley of this stream to view its magnificent waterfall. Two hundred metres downstream from the stream junction leave the river (after a short side trip to the waterfall 100 metres downstream) and climb steeply north-east up the ridge known as the Devil's Backbone. This has excellent views of the gorge and leads to the Little River Lookout. Follow the look-out road to the main road, turn left and walk four kilometres to the start of the walk. Campsites in the gorge are difficult to recommend as there are very few suitable tent sites. Bivouac bags are ideal for this walk.

For parties who wish to follow the gorge all the way to the Snowy River the last waterfall

is the one at the foot of the Devil's Backbone. After that the gorge has two deep cliff-lined pools, which most walkers swim across. The gorge then opens out and the river is lined with blackberries for much of the way. It is easiest to wade down the stream to the first river flats. It is easy walking across the flats to the Snowy River.

Map: *Murrindal*, 1:100,000, topographic. Published by Natmap, PO Box 31, Belconnen, ACT 2616. ●

## Northern Snowy Mountains

NEW SOUTH WALES

• KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK IS ONE OF THE largest and most important National Parks in Australia. It includes all of the highest peaks in the country and the headwaters of our greatest river systems. In the northern half of this park is some of the finest alpine walking in the country. Most of the area is a series of rolling plains and includes the two highest peaks outside the Main Range, Mt Jagungal and Gungartan. A large variety of walks is possible in this area. The suggested route visits many of the features of the area and is an enjoyable circuit walk, particularly in spring and early summer when the alpine daisies are in bloom.

Kosciusko National Park is mid-way between Melbourne and Sydney, about 160 kilometres from the coast. Access to the Jagungal area is by way of the Kiandra-Khancoban Road.

From the east side of the park follow the Snowy Mountains Highway to Kiandra then drive south-west to the Round Mountain Track junction. From the west follow the road from Khancoban to this junction. Private transport is necessary. Late spring to early autumn is the best period of the year for walking in this alpine area. Permits are not required, and bushwalking and camping are freely allowed across the entire region. Good maps are available. There are two guide books; *Snowy Mountains Walks* by the Geehi Walking Club and *Bushwalking in the Kosciusko National Park* by Charles Warner. Good equipment is advised, as poor weather can occur at any time of the year.

The suggested route requires four or five days. More time can easily be spent in this area if desired. From the Round Mountain Track junction walk south following the track along the Toolong Range to camp at the Tooma River. Next day continue further south to Grey Mare Hut, then west and south to the Valentine Falls. Continue south to camp near Dicky Cooper Creek just north of Schlink Pass. Next day climb east up on to Gungartan then walk north across the Kerries and past Mawsons Hut to camp beside the Geehi River. Continue north and climb up on to the isolated mass of Mt Jagungal for extensive views. Descend northwards to camp at O'Keefes Hut. For the final day follow the track northward across Farm Ridge to vehicles at the Round Mountain Track junction.

Map: *Khancoban, Kosciusko*, 1:50,000, topographic. Published by Central Mapping Authority of NSW, Panorama Avenue, Bathurst, NSW 2795. ●

## The Budawangs

NEW SOUTH WALES

• THESE SPECTACULAR SANDSTONE RANGES are 200 kilometres south-west of Sydney and lie between Canberra and the coast. They are composed of an uplifted plateau which has been deeply eroded, forming valleys, gorges, canyons and mesa-shaped mountains. The area



provides ideal bushwalking, as the central part of these ranges has no roads or constructed tracks. Walking here is an interesting mixture of easy plateaus, scrub and scrambling. The area is very popular with local walkers and all the major routes have rough pads along them which can be followed. The best seasons for a visit are autumn and spring when the weather is mild and water is generally available. Summer is popular but even the major rivers are sometimes dry and water can be very hard to find. In winter the area receives heavy frosts and the

occasional snowfall, and this season is not recommended for seeing the area at its best.

There are many caves in the ranges and some are used for camping. These are often very large and airy and ideal for extended stays in very wet weather. We advocate that a tent should still be carried even if it is intended to use the caves. Access by public transport to the range is non-existent. Local walking clubs often charter a bus for larger groups. All access roads are gravel covered and require care after heavy rains. There are three main access points and the western one has better all-weather roads and is the one suggested. Follow the Braiwood-Nerriga Road for 37 kilometres to the Mongarlowe Road junction. Turn right on to this road and follow it for five kilometres to a Morton National Park sign on the left at the edge of the farmlands. There is a car-park 30 metres east of the road. From Sydney the roads can be followed south through Nowra and Sassafras to Nerriga. Seventeen kilometres past Nerriga turn left on to the Mongarlowe Road and follow the last five kilometres as above.

Information on the park is available in the very comprehensive book, *Pigeon House and Beyond*, by the Budawang Committee. This book contains track notes, history and comprehensive details about flora, fauna and geology. The committee has also published a handy sketch map, *The Northern Budawang Range*, which is useful for bushwalking, especially if used with the 1:25,000 Corang map. Permits are not required and camping is freely permitted throughout the park except in the vicinity of Monolith Valley, where there is a total ban to preserve this unique feature. This ban does not present any problems.

Many different and equally interesting walks can be made in these ranges. Our suggested route visits some of the major features and requires three or four days. It has reasonably good all-weather road access. From the car-park follow the fence line south for five minutes to Wog Wog Creek where a National Park signpost gives information about distances and the Monolith Valley camping ban. The walking track starts beside the signpost and is easily followed. The track soon crosses the creek then climbs on to the ridges to the east. The crest of these ridges is easily east past Corang Peak, up the valley of Canowle Brook and along the range east to Bibbenluke Mountain Camping Area. This is a good campsite five to seven hours walking from the road and forms an ideal base for exploring the area. From this campsite is a very long and interesting day trip. This circles north round Mt Cole into Monolith Valley, climbs the Castle and returns over Mt Owen. This involves some rough scrambling and is well worth the effort. The views from the Castle and Mt Owen are spectacular. The area is a mass of sandstone spires and buttresses. Entering Monolith Valley is like stepping into another world. It is very quiet, with overhanging cliffs rising on both sides. The sandy floor supports a variety of ferns and larger trees. The camping ban is, in our opinion, justified to help preserve this feature. Some steep scrambling is involved on this long day trip, but we regard it as one of the best day's walking in Australia. From the camping area, Mt Tarn is an easy half-day trip which is worth walking if time permits. The summit dome is very difficult to climb but the plateau provides excellent views.

To return from the Bibbenluke Mountain Camping Area walk north-west following a ridge past Mt Tarn down to the Corang River. Follow the river downstream to Goodsell Creek. Turn left and walk up the valley of this creek to the saddle at its head where the original track is crossed. This is easily followed west back to

the car-park. This is a long day's walk and some parties prefer to take two days to follow this route. If the river levels are high the main track can simply be retraced from the Bibbenluke Camping Area to the car-park.

Maps: *The Northern Budawang Range*, sketch map. Published by the Budawang Committee, 40 Alexandra Avenue, Eastwood, NSW 2122. Corang, 1:25,000, topographic. Published by Central Mapping Authority of NSW, Panorama Avenue, Bathurst, NSW 2795. ●

## The Blue Gum Forest

NEW SOUTH WALES

● THE BLUE MOUNTAINS ARE IDEAL FOR bushwalking. Each walker familiar with this area has his or her favourite walk here, but most agree that the Blue Gum Forest is one of the most beautiful features in the region. Near the forest are narrow canyons, waterfalls and deep cliff-lined valleys which can be combined into an enjoyable and memorable walk. Much of this walk is along well-used tracks, providing pleasant easy walking in the Grose valley and its tributaries.

The Blue Gum Forest is 100 kilometres west of Sydney and just north of Katoomba. The walk begins at the Victoria Falls Look-out. To get there a train can be taken from Sydney to Blackheath, using a taxi for the last ten kilometres to the look-out. The walk ends at Neates Glen, five kilometres south of Blackheath. A taxi can be booked to pick you up, otherwise it is a pleasant walk through the streets of Blackheath to the town centre. If using private transport a car shuffle can be arranged before beginning this walk. Permits are not required for bushwalking but all walkers should fill out the log book which is kept at the Blackheath Police Station. Camping is restricted to two areas only: Acacia Flat and Burra Korain Flat. Camping in the Blue Gum Forest is banned. Bushwalkers purchased the forest many years ago to preserve it, and walkers are strongly urged to obey the restrictions. The walk is suitable for all seasons. Water in the valley suffers from pollution and it is best to boil all water or carry in supplies.

The walk takes an easy two days and follows well-defined tracks. From Victoria Falls Look-out proceed down the good track past the waterfall and on to Burra Korain Flat. Follow the less-used track down the western bank of the Grose River to the Blue Gum Forest. Continue 500 metres past the forest to the extensive camping area at Acacia Flat for an overnight stop. Next morning follow the walking track along the western bank of Govetts Creek. Do not follow the track to Rodriguez Pass, but continue to follow the main stream, which eventually leads into the Grand Canyon. Follow the well-used track through the Grand Canyon. This is a magnificent narrow canyon which is very interesting and spectacular. Climb up through Neates Glen to the car-park at the end of the walk. If transport has not been arranged turn left to follow the road for three kilometres then right on to Valley View Road for a further two kilometres to Blackheath.

Maps: *Mount Wilson*, 1:31,680, topographic; Katoomba, 1:25,000, topographic. Published by Central Mapping Authority of NSW, Panorama Avenue, Bathurst, NSW 2795. ●

# Fraser Island Circuit

QUEENSLAND

● THIS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE BEST areas in which we walked last year. This beautiful island has tall rainforest and lovely lakes. The island is composed almost entirely of sand which rises to 240 metres above sea level. An amazing variety of vegetation covers the island, ranging from mangroves to rainforest and fern glades. The northern end of the island is managed by the National Parks Service and provides some fine wilderness walking through thick scrub. The most beautiful part of the island is in the centre and, while not being a wilderness, provides enjoyable track walking through a very representative part of the island.

Situated 250 kilometres north of Brisbane, Fraser Island is readily accessed by public transport. A variety of buses run daily from Brisbane to Hervey Bay which is the local service town. There is plenty of cheap accommodation in this town for late arrivals. Access to the island is by barge or tour groups from the town. Barges can transport four-wheel-drive vehicles to the island (conventional cars are banned) and provide the cheapest transport. The barge wharf is 20 kilometres south of the town. If you are without transport, the easiest and most convenient way is to join a tour group that is going to Eurong, on the east coast. The operators are usually very helpful to bushwalkers and the \$30 fee (1986 average) includes all transport to and from the town and one lunch on the island. It is necessary to notify the operator at least the day before leaving that you wish to split your visit. Permits are required both for visiting and for camping on the island. The camping permit must be obtained in advance from the Forestry Offices at Maryborough or Ungowa or from the Hervey Bay Council Offices. The visiting permit fee is paid on day of entry to the island. The climate is mild to warm all year, so little equipment is needed for walking. Sandshoes are recommended, as the entire walk is on sand. There is very little information available on walking the tracks apart from a very simple leaflet available from the Forestry Offices. The recommended Forestry Commission map has no contour lines, but shows virtually all tracks and is invaluable for navigating through the maze of tracks that exist.

The recommended route follows signposted walking tracks which use old, closed roads, some existing roads and some specially marked walking tracks. It requires three full days and can be extended to a pleasant four-day walk by camping at Central Station. The walk starts at Eurong (a holiday resort on the east coast) and follows the beach north for 3.5 kilometres and then along the foot track to Lake Wabby. Past the lake the track follows an old road south for 2.5 kilometres. A well-used road is now followed west for two kilometres then along the shore of Lake McKenzie to the camping areas on the western shore. Camp at the walkers' campsite, which is separate from the main camping ground. Next day the track starts at the lake shore and follows a maze of tracks south past Basin Lake to Central Station. The route then follows a vehicle track towards Lake Birrabeen for 4.5 kilometres. It continues along a mixture of old tracks and well-used roads past several

other lakes to the southern end of Lake Benaroon. A partly overgrown walking track is then followed to Lake Boenington for the next night's camp. The last day follows a spur south-east to the ocean beach, then north along this for ten kilometres to Eurom.

Map: *Fraser Island South*, 1:50,000; a forestry map published by Sunmap, Adelaide Square, Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld 4000. •

## Ormiston Gorge and Mt Giles

### NORTHERN TERRITORY

• THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA HAS SOME magnificent ranges which are well worth exploring. The Macdonnell Ranges are the largest and most spectacular of these mountain chains and provide some excellent bushwalking. This range is composed of high parallel ridges which are cut by deep gorges. The largest and most colourful is Ormiston Gorge and this is combined with the nearby Mt Giles to form an interesting and varied desert walk.

Ormiston Gorge is 100 kilometres west of Alice Springs and has a good sealed road to its entrance. At the end of the road is a free camping-ground with water, toilets and free solar-heated showers. There is no regular public transport to the gorge, although tour buses visit it occasionally. It may be possible to join a bus tour from Alice Springs. The gorge and Ormiston Pound (the valley behind) form a National Park. A free permit is required for bushwalking in the park and this can be obtained from the Ranger's office at the display centre near the camping ground. The Ranger can also advise on the probable sources of water at the time of your visit. There are no useful maps for this walk. The aerial photograph displayed at the visitor centre is very helpful as it shows the route to Mt Giles. Fortunately visibility in this dry area is very good and navigation is not a problem. Summer is not recommended for walking here; autumn, winter and spring are all suitable walking seasons. The weather is almost always hot and dry, and long sleeves and shady hat are advised. Gaiters are useful for protection from the spinifex. Stoves should be carried as firewood is scarce.

Four days are required to complete the circuit of Ormiston Pound and climb Mt Giles. A shorter three-day walk follows the same route out and back from Mt Giles. From the camping ground follow the walking track into the gorge to a deep waterhole on a large bend. Swim across the waterhole and follow the stream out to the flat Ormiston Pound valley. Walk east across the pound then south-east to the southern side of the Chewings Range near Mt Giles. Camp can be made on the terrace at the foot of the range, and water is usually available in the gullies that cross the terrace. Next is a day trip without packs. Climb north up the steep slopes to the trig marker (this is not the Mt Giles shown on the map). From the trig marker follow the ridge east through three steep saddles to the tree-covered Mt Giles. Return along the ridge before descending south to the plains and the campsite. On the third day follow the creek downstream across Ormiston Pound to meet the main Ormiston Creek. Follow this creek upstream to the waterholes just before Bowmans Gap. The gap is worth walking through. On the fourth day follow the main creek

downstream to meet the marked walking track above Ormiston Gorge. Turn left and take this track up over the ridge above the eastern side of the gorge to the camping ground.

Map: *Hermannsburg*, 1:250,000. Published by Natmap, PO Box 31, Belconnen, ACT 2616. •

## Stirling Ranges

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

• MOST OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN CORNER of this large State is rolling hills which provide little interest to the bushwalker. In the middle of all this undulating area is a small range of abrupt isolated peaks which are very rugged and well

but it is advised to inform the Ranger of your presence by filling out the log book which is kept at the Bluff Knoll turn-off at the northern boundary of the park. Water must often be carried in these dry ranges. The area is situated close to the southern coast of Western Australia and experiences sudden, dramatic weather changes. Full wet-weather clothing is needed. There are several small camping caves which can be used. Tent sites are few and often offer only poor shelter. The route followed consists mostly of rough walking pads. There are no markers along the route and some care is needed to follow the easiest way. The walk is fairly hard and passes through many bands of prickly scrub and up and down several steep cliff faces.

A traverse of the range can be made in two long days or three 'medium' days. The circuit



Ormiston Gorge usually contains much less water; this photo was taken after rainfall.

worth visiting. The classic walk traverses the eastern end of the range from Bluff Knoll to Ellen Peak, and this requires a car shuffle (see *Wild no 6*). Alternatively, a circuit can be made from the First Arrow to Ellen Peak, the most rugged part of the range. The Stirlings are famous for their wildflowers. The best months to see them are September and October, when the spectacular and varied flower displays occur.

The Stirling Range is 400 kilometres south-east of Perth and 80 kilometres north of Albany. Access to the Stirling Range National Park is good. From Perth follow the roads south-east to Borden then a further 23 kilometres south to the petrol station at Amelup. For the car shuffle continue south for eight kilometres to the Bluff Knoll Road, just inside the park boundary. Leave one car at the Bluff Knoll car-park and return to Amelup. From Amelup turn south-east on the Sandalwood Road and follow this for 15 kilometres to turn right at 'Glenelg'. About 300 metres past the farmhouse turn left and follow the road reserve south for two kilometres to the park boundary. There is no public transport available for this walk and private or hire cars are necessary.

Permits are not needed for walking the range,

walk takes two medium-length days. Starting from the park boundary near 'Glenelg', walk south through the scrub and follow the low ridge west up to the knoll situated north-east of Ellen Peak. Rough pads can then be followed up over Ellen Peak and along the crest of the range west to the camping cave at the Third Arrow. Water is usually available in a nearby gully and there are a few tent sites on the east side of this rocky tower. Continue to follow the range west over the Arrows and descend steeply off the First Arrow on to a flat ridge. For those walking the circuit, a track descends steeply north to the Arrows Fire Track which is easily followed north to the park boundary then west along the boundary fire track to the car. To continue the walk along the range follow the ridge west over Islongorus Peak then follow the twisting ridge down into a low saddle then up on to Bluff Knoll. This twisting ridge is fairly scrubby and rough tracks aid progress. Descend from Bluff Knoll following the well-used track to the car-park.

Maps: *Chester Pass, Ellen Peak*, 1:50,000, topographic. Published by the WA Department of Lands and Survey, Cathedral Avenue, Perth, WA 6000. •

John Chapman (see Contributors in *Wild no 1*) is one of Australia's most travelled and widely respected bushwalkers. He is particularly well known for his books of Tasmanian track notes.



**David Mentz**

*All photos were taken on Mt Stirling, Victoria.*







**Wild**  
AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Carving Telemarks in new snow on Mt Stirling, Victoria. David Mentz



# THE SEARCH FOR THE STINSON

Mark Yuile reconstructs the story of one of Australia's most celebrated bush searches

• LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK IS FAMOUS for its diverse wildlife and abundant walking tracks. Most of these tracks are graded and are in the more developed northern section of the park surrounding the O'Reillys and Binna Burra guest-houses. However, a less used and perhaps far more interesting walk exists in the more remote southern area of the park around Christmas Creek. Its main attraction is that it leads to the remains of a three-engined Stinson monoplane which crashed there 50 years ago last February.

The aircraft, the 'City of Brisbane', was on a regular mail and passenger run from Brisbane to Sydney. The plane left Archerfield aerodrome at about 1 pm on Friday 19 February 1937 in not unusually bad weather. On board were pilot Rex Boyden, co-pilot Beverly Shepherd and five passengers: Westray, Graham, Fountain, Proud, and Binstead who was using the assumed name of Barnett.

Usually, the plane would fly inland to Lismore where additional cargo and passengers were picked up. However, due to bad weather encountered on an earlier trip, pilot Boyden had indicated that he would follow the coast and bypass Lismore. However, he did not follow the coast, and after encountering cyclonic conditions over the McPherson Ranges the Stinson crashed into the side of Lamington Plateau only 40 minutes from Brisbane.

The mistake of changing the flight plan was magnified by the fact that the 'coastal route' theory had been verified by numerous eyewitness reports from Currimbin to Broken Bay. For this reason authorities were convinced that the plane



## MAIL 'PLANE MISSING WITH SEVEN ON BOARD

**Bound from Brisbane to Sydney**

**MAY HAVE LANDED ON BEACH**

**Intensive Search Ordered for To-day**

AN Airlines of Australia Stinson passenger monoplane which left Archerfield aerodrome for Sydney yesterday afternoon with a pilot, first officer, and five passengers on board has not been heard of since.

Gale conditions have been experienced along the coast for the last few days, and it is possible that the pilot made a landing on one of the beaches.

Those on board were:

REX BOYDEN (31), pilot;

BEVERLEY SHEPHERD (about 30), co-pilot;

J. K. WESTRAY (25), of Lloyds Ltd., London;

ROWLAND GRAHAM, Sydney;

J. BARNETT, Sydney;

WILLIAM W. FOUNTAIN, Brisbane;

— PROUD, Sydney.

The contemporary photo and newspaper cutting in this article are reproduced by permission of the *Courier Mail*, in which they originally appeared.

must have crashed on the latter part of its journey, in the rugged country surrounding the mouth of the Hawkesbury River.

On Saturday morning an intense ground and aerial search was mounted that would continue for five days. Concentrating on the Hawkesbury and Broken Bay areas, the search widened to include most of the coastline. Some attempt was also made to search the inland route, but the almost constant cloud over the McPherson Ranges made any serious aerial search of that area impossible. By Thursday 25 February still no trace of the airliner had been found, and there was a growing opinion that the aircraft had crashed into heavy seas and sunk without a trace.

While the search was still continuing Bernard O'Reilly and his family, Lamington's only permanent residents, were recovering from one of the worst cyclones they had ever experienced. The O'Reilly family first came to the McPhersons in 1911, before the area became a National Park. Bernard's five brothers and three cousins each took selection of a small tract of land on Roberts Plateau where Bernard and his sister Molly now ran a small mountain guest-house.

Bernard and his family had first heard of the plane crash by radio, and like many Australians they held deep fears for the safety of the occupants. Due to the extremely bad weather on 18 and 19 February, several kilometres of the O'Reillys' telephone line lay on the ground and their access road was virtually impassable, cluttered with huge logs and fallen debris. As a result Bernard and his family received no news for some days and, as a result, knew little of the crash.



THE VIEW NORTH FROM POINT LOOK-OUT TO THE FOREST-COVERED BORDER RANGES. MARK YUILE

Eventually, on Friday 26 February, Bernard was able to visit his brother, Herb, who had a small farm near Kerry. Here, among other things, he looked through the newspapers of the previous week. Out of the many conflicting reports and sightings, one definite fact came to Bernard's attention—that the plane never landed in Lismore. This meant little to the authorities, however, as they were convinced that the Stinson had followed the coast. However, Bernard had discovered that many of the farmers in the district had seen the plane about 2 pm, flying low in the direction of the cloud-covered McPhersons. This led Bernard to conclude that the plane had crashed somewhere in those high ranges.

Upon reaching home that night he took out a map and drew a line from Brisbane to where the plane was last seen heading towards Lismore. This line crossed four major lateral ridges that ran from east to west. His plan was to follow the main border range, checking the northern side of each of these four.

The next morning he packed some food and a billy, said goodbye to his family with the remark, 'I'll see you when I see you', and set off. He travelled on horseback to Mt Bithongabel, which was then the limit of the graded tracks. From here on, travelling through the thick rainforest was on foot.

In his book, *Green Mountains*, Bernard explains that as the nature of the country made using a compass impossible, he navigated using his knowledge of the environment:

'The jungle is full of signs to tell you the points of the compass. Northern and eastern slopes are always

matted with lawyer and raspberry vine, while southern slopes give way to forests of fern trees and great clusters of lilies. Also the southern side of a tree is heavily covered with lichen and moss while the northern side is a smooth bole.'

Shortly after dawn on the second day Bernard's search brought him to the summit of Mt Throakban, some 1,100 metres above sea level. Here, after waiting for almost 15 minutes, the dense cloud parted to provide a brief glimpse of the remaining three ridges. There on the third was a single burnt tree, vivid amongst the vast green of its neighbours and in the same position as that where the pencil line crossed the ridge on the map. Bernard tore off with renewed vengeance, travelling blind across the steep gorges. It was eight hours before he was at the top of the ridge which was Lamington Plateau.

Here his loud 'coo-ee' was answered by two feeble voices only a short distance below. There, once again, he saw the single burnt tree. At its foot was the charred twisted wreck of the stricken plane. Lying below this were two men.

Proud was lying on his back as he had for nine days, his right femur badly fractured with the wound open to the air and infested with maggots. This fact, however repulsive, probably saved his life. Because maggots will only eat rotting flesh they clear the wound, preventing the spread of infection. Binstead was seated nearby, his hands and feet badly swollen and torn by his daily scramble down the near-vertical slope for water.

After the introductions were made Bernard had begun to boil the billy when Proud asked, 'What's the score?', referring

to the current cricket Test against England.

The plane had been caught in the 160 kilometre an hour winds that buffeted the



Mr. Bernard O'Reilly, who discovered Stinson, resting after his return to Lamington yesterday afternoon.

McPhersons that day. It was torn apart upon hitting the thick canopy and burst into flames shortly after impact. As Binstead regained consciousness he saw

# The Stinson Track

Mark Yuile

• LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK IS SITUATED ON THE Queensland-New South Wales border covering some 20,000 hectares of the rugged McPherson Ranges. Being in the more remote section of the park, the Stinson wreck track is a far cry from the network of well-graded walking tracks that covers the more northern area. Undeveloped and less used, it gives the more adventurous an excellent opportunity to experience this unique wilderness.

The usual starting point for the walk is the Stinson Memorial Park, a public camping ground adjacent to the National Fitness Camp at Christmas Creek. The walk can be done as a circuit by returning along the old stretcher track, or by retracing your steps back along Christmas Creek, the latter being the shorter and more popular alternative. If returning via the creek, cars can be driven about another 1.5 kilometres and left at the locked gate where the road enters private property. If returning along the stretcher track, vehicles are best left at the camping ground.

From the gate follow the road for some distance through cleared grazing land where, after several shallow creek crossings, it leads to the edge of the National Park. Here the track begins, following the south branch of Christmas Creek through sub-tropical rainforest for two or three kilometres, after which a turn-off to the south is encountered, leading up to the steep ridge that leads to the wrecks.

**Westray's grave.** By continuing along the creek a further 500 metres or so, the grave of Jim Westray can be reached. Westray was one of the wreck survivors, who fell to his death while

searching for help. The clearing here is quite large and is a popular overnight spot for those not wishing to tackle the arduous climb to the wreck.

**The wreck.** After leaving the creek the track is quite steep for some distance as the long climb is begun. The grade eases again as the track follows along the foot of a steep rock face for some distance, turning back to climb to a small clearing one very hard kilometre later. From here glimpses can be obtained of the Christmas Creek valley to the east and of Mt Westray to the north.

By continuing up the ridge the rainforest is entered once again and after another two kilometres a large clearing is reached. This is the main campsite for those visiting the wreck. A track to the wreck leads off to the north. The wreck, now only a collection of rusted tubing, can be reached in about ten minutes.

**Point Look-out.** By continuing up the ridge for a further kilometre, a track junction is reached. The branch to the south is the stretcher track. However, by continuing on for another 200 metres, you come to Point Look-out, the crest of this range before it rises again to meet the higher Border Range.

Here there is a smaller campsite. A short distance away, however, a small opening has been made in the dense vegetation through which a magnificent view of Mt Warning, the Tweed valley and the forest-covered peaks further north can be obtained.

From Point Look-out the main border track can be followed north to O'Reillys or Binna Burra lodges, or south to the Wyangarie State Forest and the Border Ranges National Park.

**The stretcher track.** This is the original route used to carry the two survivors, Proud and Birnstead, back to civilization, and provides an interesting return journey for those who dislike retracing their steps. The stretcher track is longer than the creek track. However, except where the track descends to the road near its end, it is relatively flat and is the better choice in wet weather.

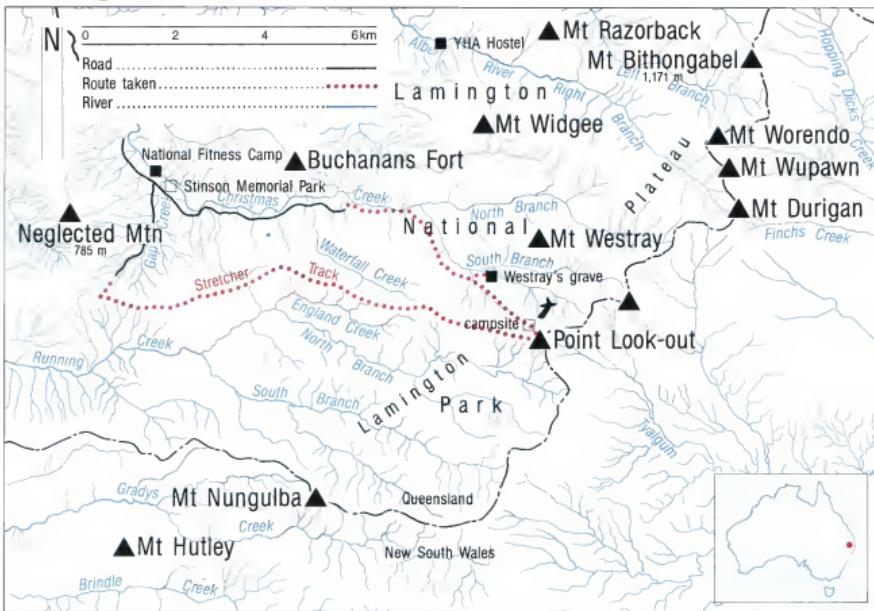
Severe mountain weather has taken its toll and in parts the track disappears completely. However, by keeping to the ridge and persevering, the track can usually be picked up again. Eventually it leads into eucalypt forest, giving impressive views back along Christmas Creek towards the wreck. Shortly after, the track descends through private property, meeting up with a road that leads back to the Stinson Memorial Park.

**Camping permits.** A permit to camp can be obtained from the National Fitness Camp Warden at any reasonable hour. These are only required for camping within the National Park and not for the public camping ground.

**Maps.** There are two maps available showing the Stinson track, the better being the Department of Mapping and Surveying 1:25,000 topographical map Lamington, sheet number 954134. The other is the National Park map 1:25,000, entitled Lamington National Park.

**Water.** While following the creek, water can be obtained at any point. However, after leaving the creek, the only other easily accessible watering point can be found by a short track leading from the wreck campsite. •

## Lamington Plateau





ABOVE, ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE STINSON TODAY. BELOW, PLAQUE AT THE WRECK. PAUL LANGFORD

Proud smash a window and begin to crawl through. Once outside Proud grabbed Binstead's hand and pulled him from the wreckage.

By this time the plane was well ablaze. The two men called frantically to Westray who was now beginning to move around inside and together they managed to pull him out as well. At a safe distance from the scorching blaze the three men congratulated themselves on their good fortune and prepared for the approaching night assured of quick rescue the next day.

According to Binstead the remaining occupants were killed on impact. He told reporters after the rescue:

'The other two passengers and the two pilots were killed instantly by the crash, and were incinerated. There is not enough left of them to identify one from the other, although their positions in the cabin and cockpit indicate the remains of each.'

The next morning Westray, the youngest of the three men, had set out down the steep slope to bring help. Following the southern branch of Christmas Creek, he fell down a large waterfall less than a kilometre from the wreck. He was carried another two or so kilometres further down the creek, over several more falls and large boulders. It was here, sitting against a rock to bathe his badly smashed ankle, that he died. That was how Bernard found him nine days later, still staring longingly down the rugged gorge. He was buried only a short distance away, and his grave is passed by the present-day track that leads up to the wreck.

Even after it had become quite obvious that a search had not been launched and

that Westray had failed, Binstead refused to leave Proud, knowing that without the daily water he brought Proud would not last long enough for help to arrive. When asked later about their ordeal Binstead replied:

'What a hero that boy is! Often he urged me to go and leave him, as he believed he was done for: but he saved my life, and I told him I would stick to him, whichever way things came out.'

At 4.30 pm Bernard left Proud and Binstead and it was not until late that night that he was in the Buchanan homestead at Lamington, preparing for the rescue. Bernard was to lead a small group of men, including a doctor, back up the gorge with medical supplies and temporary shelter, while John Buchanan was to take a cutting party up to the lower end of Lamington Plateau. At dawn they would begin to cut the 15 or so kilometres of track back along the easier terrain of the plateau.

Early on Monday morning the small party of men reached the survivors. After some initial first aid the two men were moved to a clearing cut higher up on the plateau. This clearing, now considerably bigger, is the main camping area for those who visit the wreck.

The track cutting party arrived just on sunset. The 30 or so men spent the long night huddled around two smoky campfires in drizzling rain. At dawn on Tuesday 2 March the rain eased sufficiently for the men to prepare a meagre breakfast and ready themselves for the trip back along the plateau.

Soon after dawn the stretcher bearers took their places and the group was on its way. From the beginning the litters

containing the two men moved constantly. If a man tired another took his place. This continued for 11 hours until Proud and Binstead reached Lamington where they were rushed to the Beaudesert hospital by the waiting ambulance.

Reunited once again with friends and relatives, both men soon recovered. Proud's leg was saved and healed well. Telegrams and cards flooded in to Beaudesert from friends and well-wishers all over Australia.

Now, 50 years after, some twisted and rusting tubing is all that remains of the Stinson. To reach it is no longer the

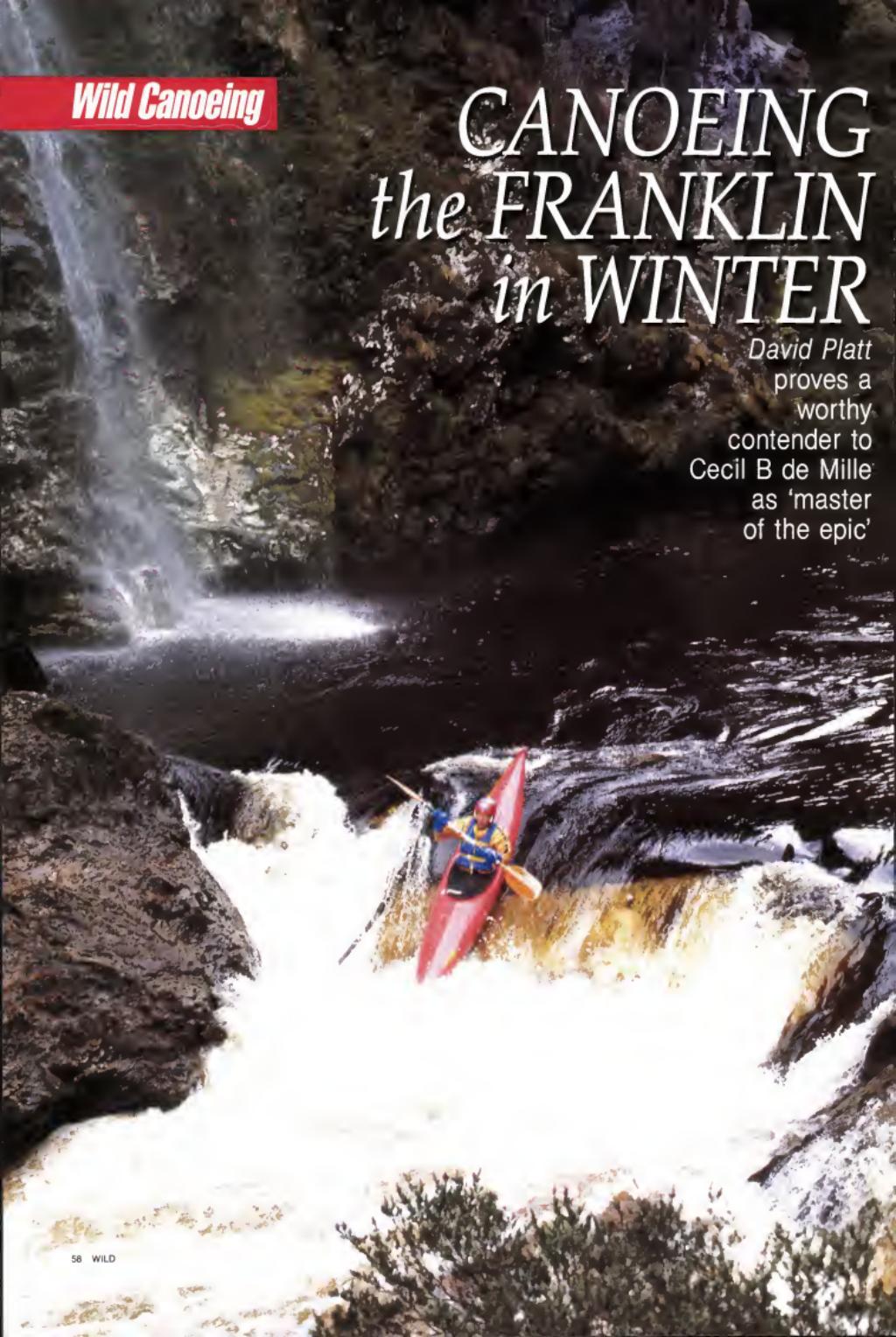


challenge it was for Bernard that first afternoon, but in visiting this lonely reminder today we can appreciate this story of heroism and sacrifice. For whenever people are tested to the end of their endurance, whenever someone forgets his own interests to come to the aid of others, there is a lesson for all of us. •

**Wild Canoeing**

# CANOEING the FRANKLIN in WINTER

*David Platt*  
proves a  
worthy  
contender to  
Cecil B de Mille  
as 'master  
of the epic'



• I AM BACK ON THE FERRY ON MY WAY home after one of the most rewarding and yet most ambitious expeditions I have undertaken. Nick and I have just canoeed down the Franklin River, in mid-winter. The river is a very popular rafting trip in summer, and probably 400 people raft and canoe down the 90 kilometres of wilderness each year. However, few people canoe or raft after March!

When I rang Nick in New Zealand about four weeks before and asked him if he fancied the Franklin, his immediate reply was, 'They don't canoe the river in winter.' Not surprising, as the conditions are extreme; not in the least bit considerate of an explorer. The river level can rise and fall 12 metres in a day. The undergrowth is so dense that in the event of an accident a walk-out would be very difficult in most parts. Unless you had a helicopter, it would probably take three or four days to walk out.

Then, having told me all this, he hung up saying he would consider it. Three days later he rang, and we arranged to meet in Tasmania for 12 days, canoeing the Franklin.

Nick arrived in Tasmania with no gear at all except his paddle, and he rang asking me if I could get together any extra equipment. In the end I managed to borrow a canoe, but the list of things I forgot was endless. I almost missed the ferry trying to collect items. Still, I walked off the ferry with my two canoes (no paddles—I forgot them!), to meet Nick.

The next two days were spent frantically trying to get the expedition off the ground. The best quality lightest freeze-dried food; everything was very carefully weighed out, checked and double checked... No mistakes this time—I even talked Nick into buying probably the best tent available. The only problem was trying to find a paddle for me. We finally found a whole chest full of them stuffed between magazines and newspapers in a newsagency. One of the great things about doing this trip in winter was that everyone was interested, very friendly and exceptionally helpful. The Ranger, for instance, gave us the use of his chalet for the night before we set off.

Once on the river, I was quickly fighting to find form again, and took a few duckings in the process. Finally we hit the first big problem. The guide describes it as a portage (you walk round it). However, we did not realize that, and sat on the bank working out a line. Finally, I thought I had the problem beaten.

I was wrong. I had completely misjudged the speed and power of the water. Without going into too many details, I was pinned under water for about one and a half minutes. First my boat slid backwards into a 'hole', a big stopper of turbulent water. I was soon upside-down, and after two attempts to roll up, realized that the full force of the water was landing straight on my boat. No chance of rolling, then. The next thing I knew, I was ripped from my boat.

I was pinned in the water, spinning round and round, upside-down. By now I was getting desperate, and realized that I was trapped in the stopper. Finally, in a last attempt to save myself (I was, I think, resigned to the fact that this was it), I dived for the bottom, or away from the light. It worked, and finally I was spat out, practically unconscious. Nick, who was on the bank taking photos, had almost given up hope by this stage, but as he saw me he dived in to tow me to shore.

As Nick was more concerned for me than my boat and paddles, he had let them go by without too much concern, waiting

reason I really wanted to head downstream was that I somehow felt confident my canoe would turn up again. In situations like this I have little reservation about praying for the miraculous.

We set off, Nick paddling his canoe, albeit somewhat anxious and timid. Grade three now felt like the hardest conditions he fancied. I was walking. The undergrowth was dense, the forest was wild, dank and very slimy. At times it took an hour to cover 100 metres. Two and a half hours later I arrived at the large pool marking the end of the Irenabyss to find Nick waiting for me. We swapped roles.



*Huffing and puffing a reluctant Franklin fire into life. Opposite, a lone kayak amidst the turbulence of a winter Franklin. All photos David Platt*

for me to appear. They were now a long way downstream: lost. We quickly assessed the situation. The result was frightening. We had made one very serious mistake: all the matches were in my boat. (We had gone to great lengths to separate them early in our planning, but somehow they ended up in separate containers in my boat.) The map was in my boat. I had no dry clothes or sleeping gear. It was very cold and wet, the middle of winter, with no possibility of a fire to warm me up. Even worse, all our food was dehydrated and required cooking.

One thing was for certain. We had to move very fast, as we could probably just survive two to three days in our present state. I had memorized the map, and spent a long time studying every different feature of the route. The only certain way out was to carry on down the river for about 11 kilometres, to a point where a walking track crossed the river by a flying fox. From there it was a further one and a half days' walk to the nearest road, and hopefully we could then get a lift to help.

So off we set down river. Another

About 20 minutes later, in an eddy above a small rapid, I noticed my paddles caught on a rock on the far bank. I called out to Nick, asking him to pick them up when he passed. We had arranged for the canoeist to keep paddling rather than waiting for the walker, and then further down the river, to stop and set off walking. We hoped this system of leap-frogging would speed things up. A few kilometres further on I started walking down the river bank.

Almost hysterical excitement overtook me as I climbed over a rock to discover my canoe washed up in an eddy. Who said prayers are not answered? All the gear appeared to be still intact. I started running back upstream to tell Nick the news, and noticed my paddles floating rapidly down mid-stream in a set of rapids. Oh well, I had a pair of splits in my boat.

Nick turned up looking cold, as though someone had just tried to drown him as well. Apparently, rather than climbing up and over one of the larger river cliffs, he had jumped in and attempted to swim—and had to abandon the paddles.

Filled with new hope and excitement, we both set off downstream to my boat. I carefully assessed the damages. Lost—



one bag of food, one repair kit, half of the spare paddles. That night we sat around the fire—a time for reflection.

The next day we started early, aiming for the flying fox where we would leave our boats, walk out and return later to finish the river with another set of paddles. However, after yesterday's answered prayer, I was confident that my paddles would turn up. Sure enough, after about 20 minutes, there, sitting in an eddy, covered in foam, were my paddles.

Someone told me the sun never shone on the west coast of Tasmania, but that day we had brilliant weather, and camped above the first set of cataracts in the Great Ravine, surely one of the most inspiring



*Left, not exactly three-star camping. Above, 'They told us it always rains in Tasmania'.*

places in the world. The relentless thunder of the wild foaming water, replenished by the cascades of mountain streams falling hundreds of metres over the cliffs into the gorge, was wilderness paddling at its best. The cliffs would rise almost vertically from the river, and like parasites the vegetation would cling to them. Unless the cliff was overhanging, out of every conceivable and inconceivable place trees of one form or another would be growing. When the slopes were climbable, the undergrowth was so dense and greasy that progress was very slow. Our feet rarely reached the ground. Each handhold was another dead or slimy stump.

Most of the major falls in the Great Ravine could have been paddled; their lead-in hard grade five, and the falls themselves would have to be grade six, but certainly not impossible at the flood level we saw them. Still, that was enough contemplation with what we had already been through and a broken paddle. The best line to be had was the portage tracks. It is surprising how common sense sometimes prevails! Still, portaging is damned hard work, and by the time we reached Thunderush, we were both exhausted.

The walk round Thunderush was reputedly a six-hour hard slog up and over the mountain side—to gain 100 metres downstream. However, we could not even find the portage track. Eventually from the opposite side of the river we worked out where it must be, but it was impossible to get to the start. The river was now in full flood and rising steadily. The point where I suppose people must normally get out of their boats was completely washed out, with a very fast current flowing through it. We decided to find a campsite and wait for the water level to fall three or four metres. Finding a campsite was harder than trying to keep leeches off, and in the end we had to level a small rock beach about half a metre above the present water level. We could just about both fit if we bent in the right places. The discomfort was just as well, as the night had to be spent subconsciously watching the river and listening for rain.

The next morning, although the water level had not fallen much, the sun was shining. Very slowly we got ourselves together and psyched up to run the falls. Anything was easier than the possibility of waiting for the river to drop a further two metres and then having to hike that six-hour portage with our canoes. By about midday we were packed. Nick ran the gorge first. He seemed to get a good

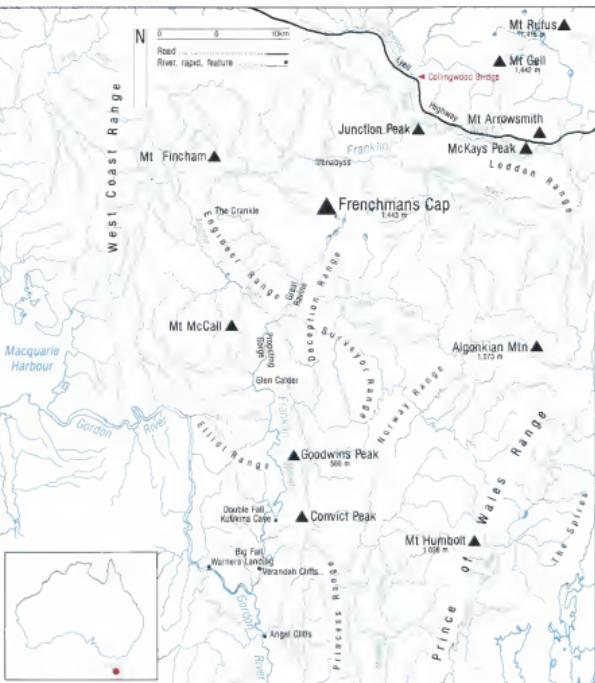
line, missing all the nasty holes. I followed and was relieved to have got an almost perfect line down the river.

We started setting up camp at Ganymedes Pool. I was building the fire and Nick was putting up the tent, when we realized Nick had left his dry container with his sleeping bag at the last campsite. It could only happen to us!

Next morning arrived rather earlier than normal, and by 8 am we were on the water. We had worked out that there must be about 35 kilometres still to go. The weather was definitely blowing up and looked threatening. Nick had no intention of spending another night around the fire. Never have I had to work so hard in a kayak. With a broken paddle it was almost impossible to set a steady rhythm, and lacking the same incentive as Nick to reach the hut, I was really pushed. By 1.30 pm we reached the hut (the pick-up point for the ferry home), minutes before a really ferocious storm blew in. We soon had the stove on, clothes drying, and began warming the place up. All rather comfortable, I thought, until we were disturbed by the sound of a jet boat. Nick did not hesitate, and by midnight we were flat out in the luxury of Nick's parents' house in Hobart.

Quite an epic! But it must rate as one of the best trips we have ever made. •

## Franklin River



**Wild Climbing**

Terry Tremble  
tells of the  
first Australian  
ascent of the  
world's most  
notorious  
mountain wall

# **EIGER!**



• 'FORGET IT', REPLIED WERNER, AN Austrian mountain guide, who had rescued me from a torrential downpour just outside Interlaken. 'It's been raining and snowing for the last seven days. The face will be covered in verglas and snow. Come back in September when it's drier.'

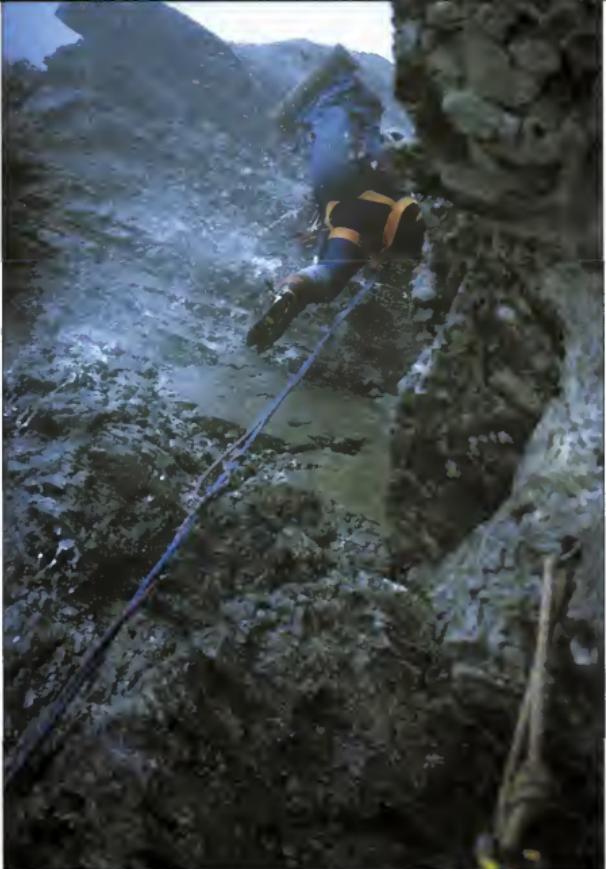
I thanked Werner for his lift, and advice, and stepped out into the freezing rain in search of my climbing partner Andy, who was also coming from Chamonix. Together with two other English friends contemplating the same climb, Andy and I made our way to the nearest cafe to dry out. Being chronically penniless, we ordered one cup of coffee between the four of us, and watched the waitress walk away, shaking her head in bewilderment. Despite my conversation with the Austrian guide, we agreed to try the route—we could always turn back if conditions proved too difficult.



**Left**, Terry Tremble's partner, Andy Cave, tackling rock and ice low on the route. **Above**, Tremble's British friends on the Second Icefield. **Right**, Cave fighting it out in the Rimp's notorious waterfalls. All photos Tremble collection

At 2 am next morning we procrastinated and discussed a rest day like true cowards. Finally, guilt drove us out into the night. I could see stars and, far above, a dark barely discernible mass. To the right, where the vast shape was darkest, I could just make out the north face. The approach was strange—no glacier, or lurking crevasses, just gentle meadows. We did not talk much; only our footsteps and breathing broke the monotonous tune of cow bells which drifted up from the fields below.

First light found Andy and I scrambling up to the base of a wide couloir that leads on to the face, right of the Shattered Pillar. (Our friends had opted for a 'rest day'.) Unroped, we crossed a snow band, and entered a system of chimneys and cracks rising above. The lower face passed quickly as we climbed up terraces, littered with loose rocks, and avoided steep walls



by taking a zigzag course. Soon we were tackling the first difficulties, the Difficult Crack. Werner's forecast was correct, and I found myself looking up 30 metres of vertical, verglassed rock. A fixed rope sneered at me from under its coat of ice. Above the undercut base of the crack I made a foolish free move that put me out on a limb. Losing feeling in my fingers, I reached high with my hammer and desperately thrashed at the ice covering an old piton. Arms totally spent, I just managed to hook my hammer point into the eye, and pull up over the bulge. After painful minutes spent thawing my fingers, I continued up the treacherous crack.

For four or five pitches we moved together over easy-angled, very broken ground, trending leftwards to the foot of the Rote Fluh, a sheer rock wall of about 300 metres; a wall within a wall. I could see rope hanging down it, left by the Japanese during their 'directissima' in 1969. As we climbed, I wondered how people can justify placing over 200 bolts in a wall just to create a line, as the Japanese had.

We arrived at the Hinterstroesser Traverse expecting to see rock slabs, but found ourselves looking at a wall covered

in thin ice. Fixed ropes across the traverse mocked us from under their protective sheet of ice. What followed was one of the most enjoyable ice pitches I have climbed. Involving delicate climbing, we had to tap, not swing, our axes at the thin ice, and 'smear' rather than kick the front points of our crampons to avoid shattering the ice.

The First Icefield proved straightforward. As we were looking up at the Ice Hose, the passage between the First and Second Icefields, a shout from below broke the silence. Our friends had decided to do the climb after all. It felt good to have company. The Ice Hose was in excellent condition, with lots of thick ice which merged into the Second Icefield. Moving together it was a pleasure to fall into the methodical rhythm—kick, kick, swing, swing—as our tools set soundly in the plastic ice. The surprising thing about the Second Icefield is its size; it is 14 pitches across. The situation underlined the true nature of climbing the Eiger: small man, damn big mountain. This reverie was interrupted by the sound from below of a helicopter working its way up the wall for a look at the feeble-minded ones. The pilot waved then swooped his machine away



Terry might tremble,  
but he doesn't shiver.

Terry stays warm in Fairydown protective clothing by day, and cosy in a Fairydown Everest sleeping bag at night. His life depends on his choice of equipment.

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On 23 June 1986, during an impressive European Alpine season, Terry Tremble became the first Australian to climb the infamous North Face of the Eiger in Switzerland. He has just returned from a daring lightweight attempt on Jannu (7,710 metres) in the Nepalese Himalayas and is busy preparing for his next expedition. Terry won't be taking any unnecessary risks, he's taking Fairydown.



We go to Extremes

for the security of space. Not wanting to waste time, we moved together up the icefield and the Flat Iron, passing remnants of the great epics of the past. Scampering across the Third Icefield, we reached the Ramp. This proved to be the crux of the route. The first five pitches passed quickly, with nothing harder than Alpine grade IV+, until we reached the foot of an icy cleft—the infamous waterfall crack above resembled Niagara Falls. (The crack is over 30 metres long.) I forced myself up through the water, literally in danger of drowning; every time I opened my mouth to breathe, I was rewarded with mouthfuls of water, gravel and even pebbles. The water was so cold I found it difficult to catch my breath. Completely saturated, we continued up an icy gully above and reached the head of the Ramp, where it funnels into a chimney that leads upwards into a wide rocky bay covered in ice. From here I could see the notorious



**Above**, at the top of the Ramp, above the Ice Bulge. Note the fallen stones embedded in the slope! **Right**, Tremble on the Second Icefield

Ice Bulge, in the middle of the raging torrent. Apprehensively, I recalled the words of a famous French climber about the face: 'Pas une ascension cela, c'est la guerre' ('That's not climbing, that's warfare'). Still under the bulge, having unsuccessfully tried several times to get a good ice axe placement into the melting ice, it became obvious that to climb the ice direct would be suicidal. I traversed out on to the left wall, initially able to keep my weight over my feet, with my front points placed precariously on tiny holds. As the wall steepened I had to find holds for my fingers, first scraping the ice away, then making sure the holds were solid. Eventually, I was able to hook my axe into the bottom of the ice smear and . . . the next second I was airborne. It seemed like an eternity before the rope arrested my rapid journey towards the valley 1,500 metres below.



'Are you OK?' shouted Andy. Hanging upside-down, 12 metres below my high-point, I reassured Andy everything was intact. Struggling back up to the bulge I regained the smear. My feet skated a little and my arms tensed with effort. Out of balance, my sack was pulling me backwards as I struggled up the overhang. All thoughts ceased; a determined precision carried me up to easier ground.

With numbed fingers, I was glad when Andy, interpreting my obvious look of dread each time I glanced upwards, volunteered to lead the next pitch. Absorbed in the climbing, I had failed to notice that it was snowing, and that the temperature had dropped. By head-torch we reached a good ledge, the Brittle Ledge, and bivouacked. Our food supply was modest—a piece of chocolate and a sip of tea. Our legs hanging over the side reminded us of our rather exposed situation. Sitting in my sleeping bag I stared into the mist as various, mostly unpleasant, visions revolved slowly in my mind, apprehension prolonging an already endless cold night.

Finally, the shadows of the night crept down the meadows towards Grindelwald,

as we, like two ballerinas, took centre stage. An unsightly groove, verglassed and overhanging, leered down at us. Silently avoiding each other's glances, we pushed on. Reaching the top of the groove we could see three possible traverse lines, all banked with snow. Choosing the highest one was a mistake. The traverse turned out to be a broken line of crumbling, intermittent ledges that sloped downwards at 80°. Reaching the end of the traverse, we looked down in amazement to see the White Spider, and the Traverse of the Gods, well below us. Realizing our mistake, we hurriedly abseiled into the Spider, and moved together across its top edge towards the Exit Cracks.

Arriving at the Quartz Crack, a ten metre body-width cleft, I suddenly became aware of an uncontrollable urge to relieve myself. My call of 'below', and apologies, were met with cries of panic, followed by unforgiveness! The remaining pitches of the Exit Cracks passed without further incident as the usual afternoon mist closed in. Climbing out of it into the sunshine that had seldom warmed us below was a transition from life in monochrome to joyous full colour. ●

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### **PULSAR**

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# Rucksacks

Hopping into the right sack, with Dave Jones

• TRYING TO CHOOSE A PACK THESE DAYS IS very confusing. Manufacturers all claim that their models leave the others for dead, fit everyone like a glove and are so comfortable that even when loaded to the brim, you hardly know you are wearing them. Unfortunately, truth is often the first victim in an advertising campaign. When choosing a pack for bushwalking you must ignore the advertising hyperbole and concentrate on the relevant facts.

Comfort of the harness system is the first criterion to consider when looking for a pack. Unfortunately, it is usually not possible to try a pack before you buy it. You may, however, be able to hire or borrow a pack from a shop or friend and take it away for a week-end. If you do this, make sure that you adjust the harness properly: a tiny adjustment can make a big difference to the comfort of a pack. Usually the best you can do is to put the pack on for a while in the shop. To make the most of this opportunity the rucksack should be adjusted to your body and loaded with about 15 kilograms. Leave the pack on for as long as you can, and if possible walk up and down some stairs as this moves the pack around on your back and can help to identify possible problems. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that because a couple of your friends find a certain brand or model of pack comfortable, that you will also find it comfortable. Even if these friends are about the same height as you, they will probably be a different shape.

Most adjustable harnesses work on the same principle. The most common harness system adjusts for back length by moving the shoulder yoke up and down. The hip-belt is usually fixed, with a small amount of adjustment possible with tape and buckles. There are some exceptions. Berghaus Laser packs use a harness which adjusts for back length by moving the hip-belt up and down. Berghaus claims that the geometry of the shoulder harness is very important, and that by moving the hip-belt, the shoulder harness can stay the correct shape. Macpac's new harness incorporates a pivoting hip-belt, to improve the comfort and efficiency of the pack. Wilderness Equipment has different sizes of pack/harness and hip-belt available. You can fit any size of hip-belt to any size of pack/harness, to get an optimum fit.

If you are less than about 165 centimetres tall, be especially careful when buying a pack. Most manufacturers claim to make a shorter harness, but in fact most of these 'shorter' harnesses are only about five centimetres shorter than the 'normal' harness. This is not enough difference for a size range of people varying by up to 50 centimetres. The other problem for shorter people is trying to find a pack of decent volume for long trips that will still fit properly. Most manufacturers seem to think that people under 180 centimetres tall only go away for week-ends in summer! It is also

important to remember that most pack designers are males, so if you are not, beware! Several years ago a range of packs came out that caused problems for the women who tried to carry them. They became known as the 'Plastic Surgeon Specials' because each one had a built-in 'do-it-yourself breast reduction kit'. The shoulder straps had sharp, raised serration on the inner edge which performed a long, slow mastectomy as you walked. Hopefully this particular stupidity will not be repeated, but others can appear at any time.

Your second decision is probably how big a pack to buy. Most pack manufacturers do not seem to have any idea of how big their packs are—the **volumes** listed in catalogues are often wrong by up to 20%. The size of pack you should buy will be dictated by your size and strength and how long you usually go away for. If you only ever do week-end trips, you do not need a huge pack. Remember one of bushwalking's primary laws: 'Nature and bushwalkers both abhor vacuums'. If there is space left in a pack, you will find something to fill it! Therefore, if you buy a huge pack, you will, somehow, always carry it full. People who use bulky items like synthetic sleeping bags will probably find they need to get a bigger pack than someone who has a compact down bag. If you are not very strong, there is little point in getting an enormous rucksack as you probably will not be able to get it off the ground when it is full, let alone carry it any distance. Gusseted side panels unzip and concertina to give the Karrimor Condor packs two distinct volumes.

Pack **weight** given is the maximum for each model; that is, the largest size and heaviest fabric combination.

The next thing to consider is the pack configuration. Do you need one main compartment or two? Do you need heaps of pockets, or will one do nicely? The prevailing wisdom seems to be that two-compartment packs are made so that you can keep your sleeping bag in the bottom compartment. I find this ridiculous. My sleeping bag is the last thing I take out in the evening and the first thing I pack up in the morning. Why on earth would I want it in a separate compartment? I have always used the bottom section of my pack to store the tent. This is the first thing I take out of my pack when I reach the campsite and last to be packed up in the morning. As Murphy's Law states: 'If it rains at any time during the day, it will be just as you start to put up your tent or pull it down.' Therefore it makes sense to me to put the tent in the bottom section of my pack so I can leave the rest of my gear sealed up and dry until I have the tent up and can unpack inside, out of the weather. Likewise, in the morning I can pack the rest of my gear whilst I am inside the tent and then stuff the wet, grubby tent into the bottom of my pack so it won't drip water down through the rest of my gear. This

method also saves me having to carry a tent stuff sack as I can stuff the tent directly into the bottom section. I can use any left-over space in the base section for spare footwear, waterproofs, or anything that can get wet and dirty.

Different models use various methods of access to the bottom section of a two-compartment pack. The usual method is a zip which runs from one side of the pack to the

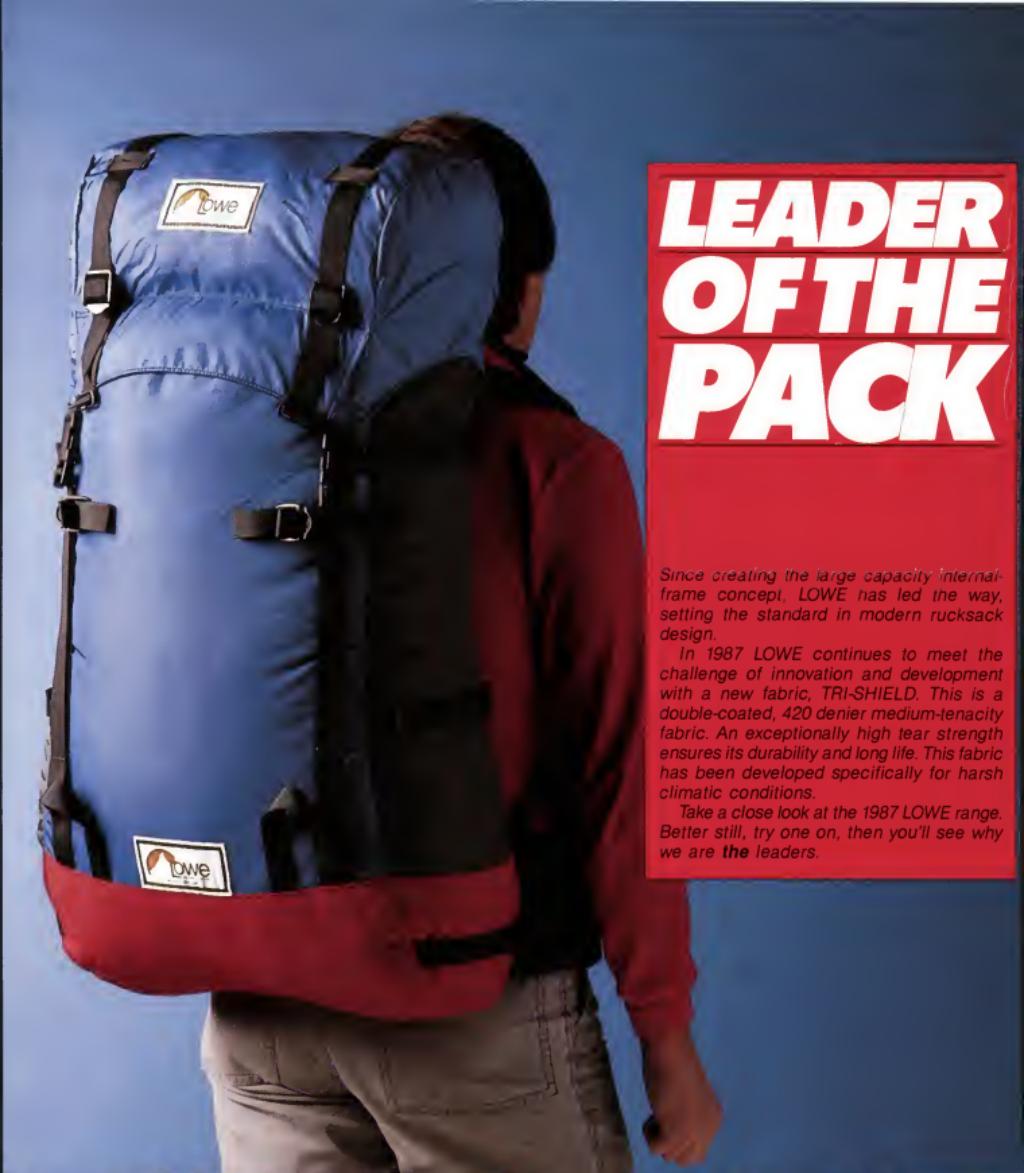


Not your average day pack! Erik Westrup

other. This is all right until you try to pack something bulky. A longer, U-shaped zip, either on the side of the pack or, preferably, on the back, makes getting things in and out of the bottom compartment much easier.

The Macpac Cascade has a zip sewn at an angle, for easier access into the pack. Most two-compartment packs have a removable division so that the pack can be used as a single compartment. This is shown as '2/1' in the **compartments** column of the accompanying table. If you are considering a two-compartment pack, make sure it has adequate protection for the zip. It is best to have special straps with quick-release buckles which take the strain off the zip. Of course, these straps can only do their job if you remember to do them up every time you close the zip. If a pack has straps specifically to protect the zip it has a 'P' in the **base compartment zip** column.

Side **pockets** do not work well in Australia, unless you only ever walk on wide tracks. The moment you step off the track into scrub you find out why they are a pain. They get caught up on every twig and branch and drive you



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crazy. On a long trip they tend to be a necessary evil, but if they are detachable you can take them off as soon as you have eaten the food that caused you to need them in the first place. Some packs have pleated side pockets that sit flat and do not get in the way when not in use. This is a good idea that works well and first appeared on the Lowe Specialist models. It has been copied by some other manufacturers. The Wild Country (ACT) Kea has them.

Most packs have a pocket on the lid which can be very handy for things you need during the day. These pockets vary greatly in size, so it is a good idea to open them up and see what you can get into them. If you have something you will want to carry in the lid pocket of your new pack, take it with you when you go to look at packs and make sure it fits in through the opening. Some packs have a pocket on the back (is it front?). This is out of the way of scrub, but can cause backache if you put anything heavy in it, as it is too far from your centre of gravity to be carried efficiently. Other packs have a method of lashing an accessory pocket on to the back. This may be a good compromise on a long, scrubby trip.

All packs surveyed are top-loading except the Camp Trails Grey Wolf and Ranger models, which open by unzipping three sides of the back panel.

If the pack of your dreams is offered in more than one material your next choice will probably involve fabric. The common fabrics are textured nylon, canvas and various forms of Oxford nylon. Some examples of proofed cloth woven from textured nylon fibres are: Ardura 1000, Cordura, Kodura, Ks100e, and Perma Cloth. Aztec 12 is a canvas-style cloth, while Packcloth, Tri-Shield, Waterbloc and Kb940 are examples of proofed Oxford nylon.

**Textured** nylon fabrics are tough and an excellent choice if you are hard on your gear or do a lot of scrub bashing or rock scrambling. However packs made from textured nylon fabrics are not good at keeping water out. The textured fibres have been 'bulked up' to make them more abrasion resistant and supple. It is important to remember that there are many different textured nylon fabrics. Some are made in America, some in Europe and others

in various Asian countries. There is a big difference in the quality of these different fabrics and in the durability of their water-proofing.

**Canvas** was originally made from pure cotton. These days it is made out of cotton and polyester. Polyester has been added to improve wear. It is even possible to get rip-stop canvas (High Tops uses this in its packs). Canvas is the most waterproof fabric used for packs, but is not as tough as nylon of equivalent weight and is heavier when it is wet. If you do not dry it properly it can mildew. Properly looked after, a canvas pack will keep your gear relatively dry and safe for many years. Most canvas packs will leak a little at the seams. Outgear claims that its new seam-binding technique is more waterproof than the others. Macpac claims that its Aztec 12 cloth is more waterproof and stain-resistant than its earlier fabric.

**Oxford** nylon is the lightest fabric used for packs and is the least abrasion resistant. The waterproofing applied to nylon fabrics varies enormously, some fabrics being very watertight while others leak like sieves.

Some packs are made from combinations of different fabrics. The most popular combination is nylon or canvas with a textured nylon base. This keeps the weight down while reducing the effects of abrasion on the most likely part to wear through, the base.

The quality of rucksack you should buy depends upon how much walking you do, and where. If you only go for short, week-end walks on prepared tracks, and can only get away twice a year, one of the cheaper, Asian-made packs will probably do if you are on a tight budget. If you go away every week-end and head off to South-west Tasmania for four weeks each year, then you had better get the strongest and best-made pack you can find. The safest rule is to buy the best you can afford.

A well-made rucksack will be reinforced at all stress points and all internal seams should be double-stitched and bound with tape to stop the fabric fraying. Unfortunately, some of the cheaper packs have all the appearances of being well made, but simply, and quite literally, fall apart. If there are any loose threads hanging off the pack, give them a good pull. If you can

break the thread in your hands, forget it, the pack will last about two kilometres on the track. Unfortunately, there are packs on the market in Australia that you can pull apart with your bare hands.

These days most rucksacks come with a mind-boggling array of straps and buckles. Some of these are useful, some not. **Compression straps** enable you to reduce pack volume. They are also useful for attaching accessory pockets to the pack. By an amazing coincidence they seem to be in standard places on most packs, so you can choose which brand of side pockets you want to use. Crampoon patches and ice axe loops are quite useless to most people. Some clever manufacturers design ice axe loops so that you can make them disappear when not in use. They can be useful for carrying things other than ice axes, so it is not a good idea to cut them off. They are invaluable for carrying snow shovels on ski trips and can be used to carry mandolins or descent recorders as one friend of mine does. Some brands of pack come with nifty little straps for carrying such awkward things as sleeping mats. A rolled sleeping mat can be carried vertically in the crampoon-patch shock-cord loops on the Fairdown, Breaking Ice and Terra Nova, Macpac Ascent and Torre, and Wilderness Equipment Expedition 2 packs. Remember, however, that things tied to the outside of your pack are much more likely to get damaged or lost than those safely inside. It is risky to carry such things as tent poles and self-inflating sleeping mats on the outside of your pack. The Camp Trails Grey Wolf, Pinnacle I and Ranger, and Mountain Designs Khumbu and Rongbuk base compartments have internal compression straps. These are useful if you have a bulky tent (or, if you insist, sleeping bag).

So, before you buy, think about your present and future needs. Look at and try on as many packs as you can. Try to decide what sort of volume you need. Think carefully about how many compartments you need and which fabric you want. Once you have made these choices you can worry about the 'bells and whistles'. •

Dave Jones (see Contributors in Wild no 6) has worked in specialist outdoor shops for many years. His knowledge (and collection!) of outdoor gear is renowned.

## Wild Gear Survey Rucksacks

Clamped capacity, litres		Weight, kilograms	Fabric(s)	Number of sizes available	Number of compartments	Base compartment	Pockets Lid box Zip Curved or Straight Protected	Compression straps	Double base	Extendible lid	Lashing patches	Swing-out straps	Throat	Bound seams	Wind pockets	Quality	Avg price
<b>Berghaus</b>	England/Korea																
AB 65	65	1.9	Textured nylon	1	1	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$245
AB 70GT	70	2.2	As above	2	2/1	S,P	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$306
Lady Pulsar 55BC	55	1.6	As above	1	2/1	C,P	LF	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$129
Laser 65BC	65	2.1	As above	1	2/1	C,P	LF	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$273
Laser 80BC	80	2.25	As above	1	2/1	C,P	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$324
Pulsar 65	65	1.8	As above	1	1	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$149
<b>Camp Trails</b>	Korea																
Grey Wolf	90	2.05	Nylon/text nylon or text nylon	1	1	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$139
Pinnacle I	75	2.65	Nylon/text nylon	1	2	S	L,2B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$159
Pinnacle II	65	2.1	As above	1	1		L,2B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$139
Ranger	60	1.75	Nylon/text styles or text nylon	1	1		L,2S	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$109
Summit	70	1.95	Nylon/text nylon	1	1	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$139
Timber	85	2.1	As above	1	3/2/1	S	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$129

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Expedition 1

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# Wild Gear Survey

		Claimed capacity, liters	Weight, kilograms	Fabric(s)	Number of sizes available	Number of compartments	Base compartment: zip, Curved or Straight, Protected	Pockets: Lrd box, Lid box, Back, Side, Removable, Mesh pouch	Compression straps	Double base	Extendable lid	Lashing patches	Sleeping-mat straps	Thruax	Bound seams	Wind pockets	Quality	Approx price
<b>Caribee</b>	Korea																	
Cheetah	54	1.6	Nylon/text nylon	1	2/1	S	L,F	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	\$115	
Expedition	60	2.1	Text nylon	1	1		L,2BS	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	\$155	
<b>Fairydown</b>	New Zealand																	
Breaking Ice	65	2.7	Canvas/text nylon	2	1		L	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	\$241	
Endeavour	85	2.5	Text nylon	1	2/1		C,P	L,B					•	•	•	•	\$305	
Endurance	60	2.2	As above	1	1			F,B	•	•			•	•	•	•	\$195	
Factotum	50	1.4	As above	1	1			F,B					•	•	•	•	\$149	
Bora Nova	80	2.5	Canvas/text nylon	1	1		L	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	\$285	
<b>Hallmark</b>	New Zealand																	
Hugger	70	2.25	Text nylon	1	1		F,B	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	\$336	
Lite Ace	50	1.5	As above	1	1			F	•	•			•	•	•	•	\$228	
Phoenix	75,85	2.6	Canvas/text nylon or text nylon	2	2	S	L	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	\$413	
<b>High Tops</b>	Australia																	
Tasse Expedition (Nameless)	60	1.5	Canvas/text nylon	1	1		F,B	•				•	•	•	•	•	\$93	
<b>Jansport</b>	Korea																	
Angles	60	2.25	Text nylon	1	2/1	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$192	
Angsila Expedition	80	2.45	As above	1	2/1	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$203	
Rock Standard	80	2.45	Nylon/text nylon	1	2/1	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$257	
Spire 1	90	2.9	Text nylon	1	2/1	C,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$223	
Spire 2	60	2.5	As above	1	2/1	C,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$195	
<b>Karrimor</b>	England																	
Condor 50-65	50/85	2.25	Nylon/text nylon	1	2/1	C	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$380	
Condor 60-80	60/80	2.45	As above	1	2/1	C	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$390	
Condor 60-100	60/100	2.7	As above	1	2/1	C	L,2BS	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$455	
Jaguar ERS	65	1.85	Nylon	1	2/1	S,P	L,25	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$260	
Jaguar S63	63	1.95	Canvas/text nylon	1	2/1	S,P	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$280	
Jaguar S85	85	2.05	As above	1	1		L,B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$330	
Panther 4	70	1.8	Nylon	1	2	S	L,25,M	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$230	
<b>Lowe</b>	Ireland																	
Cerro Torre	58,68	2.4	Nylon/text nylon or text nylon	2	2	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$325	
Cerro Torre Slimline	55	2.05	Nylon	1	2/1	C	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$289	
Fitzroy	63,66	2.2	Nylon/text nylon or text nylon	2	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$270	
Patagonia	80	2.5	As above	1	2	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$335	
Trotlet	78	2.3	As above	1	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$310	
<b>Macpac</b>	New Zealand																	
Ascent	65,70	2.1	Canvas/text nylon	2	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$255	
Canyon	70,75	2.3	As above	2	1		L,F,B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$269	
Cascade	75,80	2.55	As above	2	2/1	S,P	L,F,B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$325	
Cerro	55,60	1.95	As above	2	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$250	
Terra	75,80	2.3	As above	2	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$299	
<b>Mountain Designs</b>	Korea																	
Baltoro	60,70,80	2.6	Text nylon	3	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$201	
Gangotri	60,75	2.35	Nylon/text nylon	2	1		L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$169	
Khumba	100	3.2	Text nylon	1	2/1	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$245	
Rongbuk	60,70,80	2.9	As above	3	2/1	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$222	
<b>Outgear</b>	Australia																	
Daintree	50,70	1.8	Canvas/text nylon	2	1		8	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$178	
Kakadu	50,70	2.5	As above	2	1		L,B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$226	
Kapena	50,70	2.05	Canvas	2	1		L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$162	
Kooringa	50,70	1.65	As above	2	1		L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$141	
Megapack	110	2.55	Canvas/text nylon	1	1		L,B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$300	
<b>Wild Country</b> (ACT) Korea																		
Kea	75	2.25	Nylon/text nylon	1	1		L,F,25	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$176	
Weka	70	2.3	Text nylon	1	2/1	S,P	L,F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$188	
<b>Wilderness Equipment</b> Australia																		
Expedition 1	62,68,74,80	2.6	Canvas/text nylon	4	1		L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$189	
Expedition 2	62,68,74,80	2.8	As above	4	2/1	S,P	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$239	
The Breakout	50,55,60,65	2.3	As above	4	1		L,B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	\$149	



**Arabian 6404**  
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# Caribee packs

# Blue Mountains

A photo essay

**Blue Mountains Wilderness** by David Liddle (Second Back Row Press, 1987, RRP \$39.95).

This book is a collection of David Liddle's photographs of the Blue Mountains, with an introductory essay by botanical author Margaret Baker. It is well designed with attractively laid-out photographs.

Many bushwalkers browsing through this book will be put off by its lack of photographs of places that could be classified as wilderness under its more clinical definition. The Blue Mountains contains the two largest remaining wilderness areas in New South Wales, but only a handful of the photographs in this book show them. Most of the photographs are taken near the cliffs of Wentworth Falls, Katoomba and Blackheath. The photographer has succeeded in his aim of capturing the 'wildness of the Mountains'. The photographs are not the ordinary tourist shots found in holiday brochures. However, restricting himself to only a small part of the Blue Mountains has meant that a lot of the spectacular parts of the Mountains are missing—no photographs of the Kowmung River, Kanangra Gorge or even the Koondah Tower. Except for a few photos of the Wollangambe River, there is nothing to be seen of the Colo Wilderness part of the Blue Mountains.

Some of the plates are not as sharp as they might be. In some cases this may be due to poor printing, or perhaps a tripod should have been used more often. In books of this type we have come to expect razor-sharp images. The subject matter does not suit soft focus. As well, many of the photographs are repetitive in subject matter and concept. The book has many photographs that should have been edited out. This applies to many of the vistas. The best photographs are the close-ups of ferns, creeks and rock formations, some of which are excellent.

This is a worthwhile collection of photographs and, despite the reservations mentioned above, certainly the best book of photographs of the Blue Mountains for some time.

David Noble

**Waking to the Hills** by Geoff Spearpoint (Reed Methuen, 1985, RRP \$24.95).

The idea of publishing *Waking to the Hills* grew from the publishing of Peter Radcliffe's *Land of Mountains*. That book was an overview of popular mountaineering areas in New Zealand, most of which are in National Parks. A second volume was needed, concentrating on walking areas. Most of the areas Spearpoint deals with are in Forest Parks, which are equally enjoyable places to visit, but often lack the pictorial grandeur of the big snow mountains. However, this book does not suffer in comparison with its predecessor.

This book is not a blow-by-blow route guide like Moir's Guides. Not all the significant walking areas in New Zealand are covered. Excluded are the high mountains—the Mt Cook and Mt Aspiring areas, the Darrans and the North Island volcanoes—presumably because they are basically climbing areas and have been well dealt with in other publications, such as Radcliffe's. Other worthwhile places I have walked which are not included are the

Landsborough and south Westland, the Kaikouras and the ranges east of Fiordland such as the Takitimus.

The areas dealt with include popular track walks such as the Routhburn, Hollyford, Heaphy and Dusky Sound Tracks; well known areas

**To Care for the Earth** A Call to a New Theology by Sean McDonagh (Geoffrey Chapman, 1986, RRP \$24.95).

Philosophical reflection has a profound effect on our society. Last century Karl Marx saw life largely in terms of economics, and today it is



Sandstone formation in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Photos by David Liddle, reproduced from *Blue Mountains Wilderness*.

such as Nelson Lakes and Stewart Island, and the Tararua, playground of Wellington trampers; and wild areas which deserve to be visited more often, in particular the Raukumara or East Cape, the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Ranges to the east of Ruapehu, and the coastal Paparoa Range north of Greymouth. In all, there are 11 chapters, each dealing with a different area, and each preceded by a clearly-drawn map.

There are two excellent colour sections, but most of the book is illustrated with good, well-reproduced, black-and-white photographs and pencil sketches. They complement well the tone of the narrative. There is a short 'tramp's glossary', with touches of dry humour that Australian walkers will appreciate.

*Waking to the Hills* is compulsory reading for those walkers who go to New Zealand looking for an extension to their Australian experience—pushing scrub, rock-hopping down creeks, bouncing along snowgrass-covered tops and crossing the occasional glacier and snowy saddle. But it can also hold its own against the avalanche of coffee-table 'wilderness' books for those who just like looking at the pictures.

John Pascoe's death a couple of years ago was the end of an era in New Zealand outdoors literature. This book shows that his spirit is alive and flourishing.

John Atkinson

considered naive to justify political decisions by appealing to anything other than economics.

This philosophical baggage has caused problems for environmentalists. In saving the Franklin, many of our arguments were directed to the economic issues when there was a simpler and greater reality: the Franklin was too wild and wonderful to be destroyed. Such logic sits oddly in a world of balance sheets, profits and productivity.

Ecological crises crowd us on all sides. The task of discerning a framework for understanding our relationship with the earth is pressing. Hopefully McDonagh's contribution will inspire others.

Sean McDonagh is a Columban missionary working in the Philippines. He lives with the T'boli people, whose culture is threatened with extinction by destruction of their rainforest environment. He comes from Ireland, whose grasslands, bogs (and poverty) are a result of relatively recent destruction of what was once a continuous forest cover.

McDonagh explores the motivations for man's destruction of the earth. He argues that the Enlightenment taught us to understand the earth as a mathematical machine. This has led to technological progress but also exploitation of the earth and alienation of people. He suggests we need a new 'story' of the universe in order to better understand our relationship with it.

In searching for his story, McDonagh draws on Benedictine and Franciscan spirituality as



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a response to the gift of creation as well as the thought of Teilhard de Chardin. He looks at biblical emphases that have been missed.

*To Care for the Earth* is an accessible book of timely spiritual reflection. Its rich response to creation includes liturgies used by the T'boli people. One hymn has this response: 'Lord bless our land and your children who live by it.'

Brian Walters

**Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds** consultant editors Richard Schodde & Sonia Tidemann (Readers Digest, second edition 1986, RRP \$49.95).

Ten years ago, the first edition of this book became a necessity for anyone wishing to know more about a bird than its name. The quality of its photographs and presentation also brought the fascination of birds to a large proportion of the Australian public. The 50 authorities who contributed to the book gave an expert summary of the state of our knowledge of each species at that time.

In the new edition, the text has largely been rewritten and the maps redrawn, but the photographs are largely the same. While the text does summarize much of the knowledge acquired in the last decade, it suffers from an editorial policy that states as fact much unproven supposition, ideas which the small panel of contributors think are true, but for which they lack proof. The result is a somewhat idiosyncratic view of birds that is regrettable in a book so widely read. Nevertheless, the book remains a valuable source of information beyond that found in field guides.

Stephen Garnett

**WWF Conservation Yearbook** (World Wildlife Fund, 1986, RRP \$35 including postage: order forms from WWF, GPO Box 528, Sydney, NSW 2001).

Optimism is rare in conservation literature, especially that dealing with issues in the 'developing' countries. Yet that is the prevalent feeling in this celebration of 25 years of work by the World Wildlife Fund. While little notes of desperation do seep through the accounts of the WWF's work in some countries, the overall impression is that the exponential growth of money available for the WWF to spend on wildlife conservation reflects an understanding by both governments and business that conservation has to be the long-term objective.

Over the years, the WWF has shifted its emphasis from the rescue of single endangered species to the conservation of habitats, using rare animals as vehicles to attract support. More recently, its activities have become more esoteric, with projects such as that in Thailand emphasising the importance of conservation in the practice of Buddhism. The WWF has now spent over \$150 million on conservation around the world. Anyone wishing for relief from the largely depressing news of Australian conservation should read this report to see what can still be done in situations far worse than our own.

SG

**Indonesia-A Travel Survival Kit** by Ginny Bruce, Mary Coverton & Alan Samagalski (Lonely Planet, 1986, RRP \$17.95).

OK, so you've been to Bali, too. Bali, however, is just one small island, suitably tamed for tourists, of this intriguing archipelago of some 13,000 islands, each one with its own culture

and physical environment. Most visitors, alas, even if they get beyond Kuta Beach, remain unaware of the rich variety of Indonesia.

Lonely Planet, which has already published a large number of travel books, has added a comprehensive guide to travelling in Indonesia to its catalogue, extending and revising its previous publications on the subject. As well as providing useful information on the usual travel subjects, such as where to stay, what to see, and how to deal with local officialdom, the 'survival kit' also provides a great deal of historical and cultural information. This latter information could possibly have been cut down slightly, at 768 pages, the book is a little large to take on your travels. Illustrations range from some rather amusing caricatures of Indonesian types likely to be encountered, to some quite pleasant colour photographs. The many sketch maps also help orient the traveller. Generally, this book is a handy and current guide for those who wish to explore this entirely fascinating archipelago.

Alan Burns

**Tibet-A Travel Survival Kit** by Michael Buckley & Robert Strauss (Lonely Planet, 1986, RRP \$9.95).

For any traveller, Tibet is a romantic destination. Traditionally surrounded in mystery and impossible to enter, it is now comparatively simple to visit. However, exploration is frustrating without some knowledge, which this guide book seeks to provide.

In the tradition of Lonely Planet publications the authors write from personal experience. There are numerous facts about the region ranging from a history to tales of the yeti. In addition there are brief introductions to both the Chinese and Tibetan languages, recommendations on places to stay, advice on etiquette in a host of situations in which the traveller is likely to be placed, and many more practical details.

A visit to Tibet is likely to be an adventure. A book like this would enrich such a trip. BW

**Bushwalking and Mountaineering Leadership** (Department of Sport and Recreation, second edition, 1986, RRP \$7.00).

Written as the text for the Victorian Bushwalking and Mountaineering Leadership Certificate Course, this is by far the best single source of information for Victorian bushwalkers, especially those responsible for inexperienced parties. This second edition is less dogmatic and more logically arranged and comprehensive than the first. While unfortunately necessarily brief in parts, all Australian walkers will gain useful ideas from its pages. This book is available from selected outdoor equipment shops, the Victorian Government Printer, and directly from the Department of Sport and Recreation, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000.

Michael Colle

**A Climber's Guide to Mt Piddington** by Andrew Penney and Mike Law (Mountain Designs, updated edition 1986, RRP \$8.50). **The Narrow Neck Guide** by Andrew Penney (Mountain Designs, 1986, RRP \$9.50).

Available only from Mountain Designs shops, these guidebooks to two of the most popular climbing areas in the Blue Mountains will be welcomed by Sydney rockclimbers.

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Snowcamping, Kosciusko

Photo Andrew Barnes

**BIMBERI** A great little bag with a well deserved reputation amongst walkers, cyclists and canoeists for optimum performance yet minimal weight and bulk. For added versatility the 550gms of premium down can be distributed across the fill compartments to achieve temperature balance in tune with a range of conditions. If every gram counts then this is the bag to go for. Total weight 1.25kg. Grade 3.

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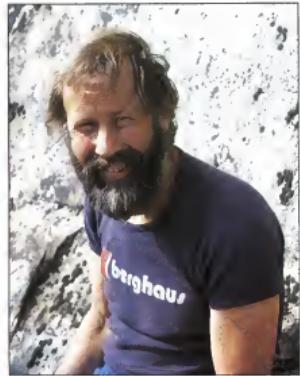
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## Reviews

*Mt Piddington* is a reprint of the classic 1962 guidebook which has been out of print for two years. The new edition includes an addendum of 30 or so new routes.

Narrow Neck has been without a guidebook for three years or so. This entirely new work is a less polished production than *Mt Piddington* but fills a gaping gap.

CB



Chris Bonington during his 1984 Australian visit. Chris Baxter

**The Everest Years: A Climber's Life** by Chris Bonington (Hodder & Stoughton, 1986, RRP \$37.95).

Those familiar with 'the Bonington formula' will not be disappointed with this, the third volume of Chris Bonington's autobiography. Most of the tales—Everest, the Ogre and Kongur—have been well told elsewhere but, for the first time, Bonington lets details of his personal and family life emerge. His energy is staggering, and should shame many 'outdoors people' half his age. Indeed, Bonington appears to be driven, and apparently spends much of his time musing over whether his lust for summits is merely the product of a rampant ego.

Chris Baxter

**Climbing** by Ron Fawcett, Jeff Lowe, Paul Nunn & Alan Rouse (Bell & Hyman, 1986).

Take a recognized authority from each of the sub-disciplines of climbing (rockclimbing, ice climbing, alpine climbing and expeditions), get each to write a section on how to go about his particular aspect of climbing, and you will come up with a definitive instructional text, right? Not necessarily. Perhaps not surprisingly, an enormous amount of old ground is gone over again. (Three colour photographs are devoted to coiling a rope.) With three of the authors being Britons it is not surprising that much of *Climbing* describes 'the British way' of going about it. The plethora of information provided seems mainly to be aimed at the beginner but there is also a considerable amount of advanced material.

The publishers set themselves an ambitious task in producing this book, and *Climbing* is not equal to it.

CB

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Winter 87

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**Map of the Snowy Plains, Mt Kent, and Lake Tali Karng** by S R Brookes (published by the author, 1987, RRP \$5.50 paper, \$10.50 plastic).

Superseding S R Brookes's classic *Snowy Plains, Mt Wellington, and Lake Tali Karng*, this 1:50,000 map with its 1,000 metre grid and 100 metre contour interval covers one of Victoria's most popular walking areas. Watercourses are shown in blue, and key information highlighted in red. Most of the sadly absurd number of logging roads and jeep tracks in the area appear to have been included.

CB

**East Gippsland Wilderness Walks: The Rodger-Bowen Wilderness** by John Stone (East Gippsland Coalition, 1986, RRP \$2.50).

This is the first of two books about walks in East Gippsland. The second describes walks on the Errinundra Plateau. The Rodger-Bowen Wilderness is the area east of the Snowy River downstream from McKillops Bridge. It is remote and wild; a good deal of it is threatened by logging.

At first sight, I was disappointed that this book was not thicker. There are nine walks described in all. Four of them are overnight walks. However track notes should only be used as a starting point, and too much detail can sour the pleasure of exploration. There are many more walks in the area than those described, but perhaps it will be best for walkers to discover those themselves.

BW

**Walk 1987** (Melbourne Bushwalkers, RRP \$4.00). **The Tasmanian Tramp no 26, 1986-7** ( Hobart Walking Club, RRP \$6.95).

The latest Walk is somewhat thinner than last year's, and one dollar dearer. Good articles include an account of a trip to waterfalls around the Errinundra Plateau, and numerous track notes.

*The Tasmanian Tramp* describes itself as a 'journal'. True to its description, this biennial publication always seems to have plenty of substance. It is supported by numerous maps and photographs, including colour.

It is the wealth of historical material which keeps taking me back to the Tramp. There is a history of huts on the Overland Track, tales of long-past bushwalks, and an account of the nomenclature of Federation Peak. It is a good reference, as well as good reading.

BW

**Wilderness Posters** by David Tatnall (PO Box 95, Clifton Hill, Vic 3068, 1986, RRP \$8.50 each, including post and packing).

These are four large, horizontal-format, colour posters that will brighten any wilderness lover's walls. Three depict Victorian coastal scenes, and one Tasmania's Central Highlands. Production is generally pleasing, rather than outstanding.

CB

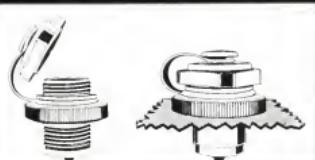
## Other Titles Received

**Animals in the Wild Series** (new titles) by Mary Hoffman & Vincent Serventy (John Ferguson, 1987, RRP \$3.95 each).

**Grand Traverse and the Mount Blanc Tour** by Malcolm & Nicole Parker (Diadem, 1986).

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# Cross Country Downhill Skis

Phil Carter is going downhill fast

• **Tools For the Descent of Man.** The range and quality of cross country downhill skis available this winter reflects the rapidly rising standard of cross country downhill skiing in Australia. Increasingly, cross country downhill speeds are limited more by courage than equipment.

There are two types of cross country downhill skis. Skis with a Nordic flex (double camber) are designed for touring and cross country downhill skiing, and have a wax pocket for holding waxes, or steps cut or moulded into the ski base, for gripping the snow while climbing. Such skis will appeal to tourers prepared to sacrifice some downhill control for better straight-line performance. Skis with alpine flex (single camber) and hard sintered polyethylene bases are built for downhill skiing. Cross country downhill skis with vibration-dampening construction (borrowed from downhill racing skis) do not rattle on crud or ice and power over and through our delightful Aussie 'porridge'.

Skis of great torsional rigidity, such as the Asnes XCD56 and Karhu Extreme, will suit those who enjoy the thrills and spills of mogul skiing. With a softer flex and less weight, the Karhu XCD Comp and Swallow TR Alpine skis handle unpacked snow well. Used with climbing skins, alpine-style cross country downhill skis offer uncompromised fast touring on steep slopes.

Skid flotation is not critical while skiing on the groomed slopes of Australian resorts. For this reason many resort-based cross country downhill skiers buy skis that are 10 or 15 centimetres shorter than normal. However, technique improves rapidly on lift-serviced slopes. As your



In orbit. David Mentz skills develop you will soon appreciate the advantages of longer skis and regret buying shorter ones. Do not be shortsighted. Ski prices are skyrocketing, so buy skis that you can enjoy for at least a few seasons. Longer skis are more

stable at speed and longer edges offer greater edge-control in fast turns. When skiing the Main Range or Mt Feathertop ski buoyancy is important. Most of our ski season is spent on heavy snow or fragile crust where the larger surface area of longer skis is useful. During those sunny

## Wild Gear Survey Cross Country Downhill Skis

Use	Flex	Flex type	Side-cut (tip/wax/tail), millimetres	Lengths available, centimetres (increments, centimetres)	Weight of 200 cm pair, kilograms	Resistance to vibration	Construction	Base	Approx. price
<b>Asnes Norway</b>									
Skidtour	Touring	Medium	Nordic	56/49/53	185-215 (5 cm)	2.1 kg	Poor	Laminated wood, foam, and fibreglass Sintered, wax	\$370
Telemark MT54	Touring and downhill	Soft	Nordic	63/54/58	180-215 (5 cm)	2.3	Fair	Laminated wood and fibreglass Extruded, wax or neg step	\$310
XCD 56	Downhill	Medium-stiff	Alpine	76/58/66	190, 200, 210	2.6	Excellent	As above Extruded, wax	\$397
Telemark Racing	Downhill	Soft-medium	Alpine	68/56/60	185-215 (5 cm)	2.8	Good	As above, reinforced binding mount Sintered, wax	\$410
<b>Atomic Austria</b>									
CCS Leader	Touring and downhill	Soft	Nordic	61/51/57	180, 190-215 (5 cm)	2.2	Poor	Laminated, wood and fibreglass Sintered, wax or neg step	\$395
Telemark OT	As above, deep snow	Soft	Alpine	72/61/67	As above	2.6	Fair	As above Sintered, wax	\$475
Telemark Racing	Downhill	Medium	Alpine	67/54/60	As above	2.3	Good	As above, metal top edges As above	\$475
<b>Blizzard Australia</b>									
Telemark ST	Touring and downhill	Soft-medium	Nordic	65/55/61	190, 200, 205, 210	2.6	Unavailable	Laminated wood and fibreglass Sintered, wax	\$340
<b>Fischer Austria</b>									
Europe 99 Crown	Touring	Soft	Nordic	65/55/60	180, 190-215 (5 cm)	2.2	Poor	Laminated wood and fibreglass Sintered, pos step	\$445
Europe 99 ST	Touring and downhill	Soft	Nordic	As above	As above	2.2	Poor	As above Sintered, wax	\$410
Telemark	Downhill	Soft	Alpine	As above	190-215 (5 cm)	2.2	Fair	As above As above	\$410



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**XCO GT** The XCO GT, a proven performer, is the favourite choice among many well-known backcountry tourers. Its cross-country camber with wax pocket combined with its 8 mm of side-cut and even flex throughout make it one of the most versatile backcountry skis available today. Width: 62 (tip), 54 (waist), 59 (tail). Lengths: 190-220

**KCO KINETIC** The addition of our new waxless Kinetic base to the XCO GT adds worry-free touring potential to this our most popular backcountry ski. Width: 62 (tip), 54 (waist), 59 (tail). Lengths: 190-220

**XCO COMP** Designed especially for lift-serviced alpine skiing slopes, the COMP is well-known for its extremely easy turning characteristics. It features single camber, even fore-aft and a stiffer tail section than the XCO GT. While popular among expert Telemarkers, it is an easy ski to learn on. For the recreational Telemarker who wants immediate response and fun.

**XCO EXTREME** Constructed wider and torsionally stiffer than the other XCO models, the EXTREME offers greater flotation in powder, powers through crud and offers excellent stability and edge control on hard icy surfaces. Features metal tip and tail protectors along with the binding retention plate. For extreme skiers. Width: 72 (tip), 59 (waist), 64 (tail). Lengths: 196, 207, 212



Use	Flex	Flex type	Side-cut (tip/wast/ail), millimetres	Lengths available, centimetres (increments, centimetres)	Weight of 200 cm pair, kilograms	Resistance to vibration	Construction	Base	Approx. price
<b>Jarvinen</b> Finland									
Telmark	Downhill	Soft	Alpine	69/52/59	Unavailable	2.2	Good	Unavailable	Sintered, wax \$499
<b>Karhu</b> Canada									
KD Kietic	Touring and downhill	Soft	Nordic	62/54/59	190-220 (5 cm)	2.2	Poor	Foam and fibreglass	Extruded, wax or pos step \$259
KD Comp	Downhill	Soft-medium	Alpine	As above	As above	2.0	Fair	As above	Unavailable, wax \$235
KD Extreme	Downhill	Stiff	Alpine	72/59/64	198, 207, 212	2.4	Excellent	As above, reinforced binding mount	Sintered, wax \$317
<b>Kastle</b> Austria									
Telmark	Downhill	Soft	Alpine	66/54/59	190-210 (5 cm)	2.2	Poor	Laminated wood and fibreglass	Sintered, wax \$409
<b>Kazama</b> Japan									
Comp Graphite	Downhill	Stiff	Alpine	67/52/63	210	3.4	Excellent	Torsion box, laminated wood core	Sintered, wax \$509
<b>Rossignol</b> France									
TMS Telmark	Touring and downhill	Medium	Nordic	63/54/58	190, 200-215 (5 cm)	2.0	Fair	Foam and fibreglass	Extruded, wax or pos step \$299
TRS Equipe VAS	Downhill	Stiff	Alpine	67/55/61	200-215 (5 cm)	2.3	Excellent	As above, metal top edges	Sintered, wax \$395
<b>Swallow</b> Japan									
TR Alpine	Downhill	Soft	Alpine	69/52/59	185, 195-210 (5 cm)	2.3	Fair	Graphite and glass-fibre torsion box	Sintered, wax \$325
TR Comp	Downhill	Medium	Alpine	As above	205, 210, 215	2.6	Good	As above	As above \$399
<b>Trak</b> West Germany									
Telmark	Touring and downhill	Soft-medium	Nordic	68/57/63	190, 200, 210, 215	2.4	Fair	Laminated ABS and foam	Extruded, neg step \$395

spring days, longer skis glide smoothly through that glorious corn snow that makes everyone an expert.

All the skis surveyed have full-length metal edges. The middle section of some models is reinforced to better retain binding mountingscrews. Boots and bindings must match your skis, not to mention likely abuse. Refer to the cross country downhill ski survey in *Wild* no 17 page 32, the cross country ski boot survey in *Wild* no 17 page 79, and the cross country ski survey in *Wild* no 21 page 65. Faster skiing on big skis means big boots, solid bindings and, most importantly, loud lycra tights!

Cross country downhill skiing instruction is offered by several organizations including Bogong Jack Adventures (057) 21 2564, Outdoor Travel Centre (03) 67 7252, Paddy Pallin Jindabyne (064) 56 2458, Ski Touring Association of Victoria (03) 489 5265, Wilderness Expeditions (064) 52 1587, and various ski resort ski schools.

Freestyle competition is an ideal way of developing techniques and meeting like-minded skiers. Telemark race details are available from the Australian Ski Federation. Races are usually held late in the season at Falls Creek, Guthega, Perisher and Mt Buller.

Phil Carter

• **Long-back Broiga.** An extended version of the popular Yankee, the Outgear Broiga is one of the few day packs with an adjustable harness. Weighing 800 grams and designed for people with long backs, the Broiga has a sturdy 12-ounce Birkmyre canvas body with textured-nylon base, removable closed-cell back, attachment points for chest- and waist-straps, and an optional internal frame. RRP \$79.

• **Aspiring.** The Jansport Spire internal-frame rucksacks have two main compartments, with a removable division, curved-zip access to the bottom compartment, ladder-style adjustable harness, pivoting hip-belt and lumbar pad, porous back-pad, compression straps, sternum

strap, draining waist-pockets, and a floating detachable lid with two pockets. The Spires are made from Kodura 1000 texturized nylon fabric.



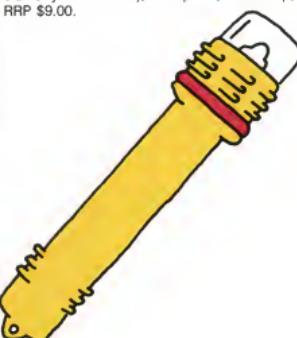
Jansport Spire 2.

The Spire 1 holds a claimed 90 litres and weighs 2.9 kilograms. RRP \$223. The Spire 2 holds a claimed 60 litres and weighs 2.5 kilograms. RRP \$195.

• **So, the old disappearing blade trick..** The Tekna Hidden Edge pocket knife has a 63 millimetre drop-point stainless steel blade that folds into a skeletal handle (the cut-out sections of which match those cut from the blade) and weighs only 38 grams. The push-button pivot mechanism locks the blade in both open and closed positions. Distributed by *Outdoor Survival*. RRP \$57.50.

• **Tooth Picks.** The Cassin 45, 50, or 55 centimetre ice axes and north wall hammers have nylon webbing wrist-slings and cost about \$190 each. The axe is available with the drooped ice Fall pick, the hammer with interchangeable drooped ice Fall pick, reverse-droop Glace pick or a tubular pick.

• **Flasher.** Yet another Tekna torch clone available from *Outdoor Survival*. Neons accept two AA batteries and are small, colourful (black, blue or yellow bodies), waterproof, and cheap; RRP \$9.00.



• **White Water Wear.** The sophisticated Australian-made Eddyline waterproof kayak cagoules have raglan sleeves, elbow tucks, French seams, sealing neoprene collars (with gusset and Velcro closure) and cuffs, and are now fully tape seam-sealed. They are available in sizes XS to XL.

The Breakout is made from four-ounce proofed nylon in two-colour combinations. RRP \$59.95.

The Ultra is made from three-ply Taslan Gore-Tex. RRP \$149.

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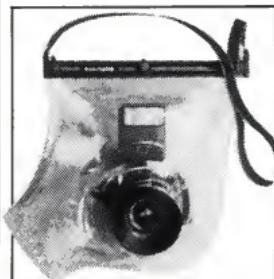
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• **Pocket Toolbox.** The new Victorinox Ultima Swiss Champ pocket knife succeeds the Champion model, boasts 29 functions and weighs only 200 grams. New, additional, features include a ballpoint pen, chisel, pliers, miniature screw driver, and wire cutter.

Usual features include two blades, cork screw, bottle- and can-openers, fish scaler, hook disengager, imperial and metric ruler, magnifying glass, manicuring implements, two saws, two screwdrivers, scissors, tooth pick, tweezers, and a self-draining reticulated basin. RRP \$85.



Victorinox Ultima Swiss Champ.

A belt-pouch survival kit, which includes the Ultima Champ together with a compass, matches, sewing kit, and other paraphernalia is also available. RRP \$137.

(The Ultima Champ doesn't really have a kitchen sink.)

• **Nocturnal Navigation.** Have you ever suffered the humiliation of having to simultaneously rescue your benighted party and reputation as a navigator by scouring a map illuminated only by flaring match-light? If the memory is still withering, or if you are a roganier and revel in such night-long epics, you'll welcome the Sisteco OC-20-T compass from Finland.

The rotating, luminous compass capsule is mounted on a rectangular clear-plastic base with a large, moulded magnifying lens, calibrating rules, and a unique miniature electric light. The tiny battery acts as a sprung switch-button and is claimed to have a shelf-life of about two

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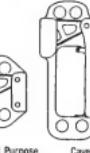


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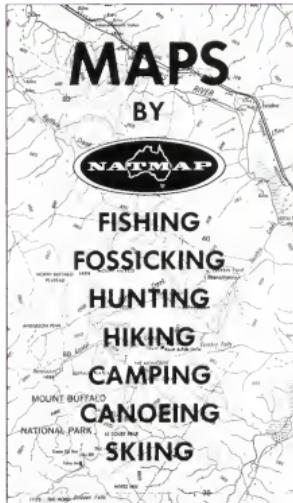


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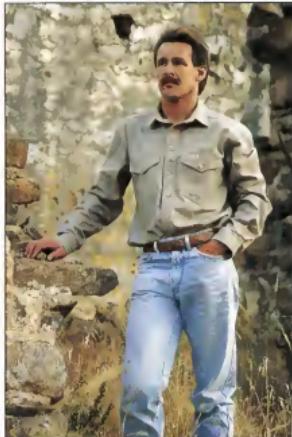
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years. Replacement batteries are available from the distributor, Clipper Trading Company. RRP \$29.50.

● **Hi-fibre II.** The new Jackeroo High Country joins the K-Mart Jackeroo West Ridge and East Face sleeping bags, ironically the only Australian-made sleeping bags with Du Pont Dacron Qualofil insulation (see *Wild* no 20 page 79). Four central tunnels which run the length of each of these Dacron fibres contribute, marginally, to the fibre's insulation properties. These sleeping bags can be machine-washed and dried, and are non-allergenic. The rectangular Jackeroo High Country has an adjustable hood, a full-length two-way zip, nylon taffeta outer shell, cotton inner lining, and a unique integral carry-pack. RRP \$100.

● **Bush Shirt.** Snowgum Adventure Wear, a subsidiary of J & H Agencies, has started producing rugged outdoor leisure wear. Its new *Bush Shirt* is made from red or 'sand' eight-



Snowgum Adventure Wear *Bush Shirt*.  
 ounce cotton canvas, with two large button-down chest pockets, rounded tail, twin-needle stitching, heavy thread, and elbow patches. Could this be the toughest shirt available in Australia?

The maker claims the only thing better than a new Snowgum canvas shirt is an old one. (Shorts are on the way.) They are available in sizes XS-XL. RRP \$75.

● **Crush, Crinkle, Rip!** The popular Puradown Florida Dacron Hollowfil sleeping bags are now available with lightweight crinkle-finish ripstop nylon fabric. The crushed fabric is quiet and soft to touch. The rectangular Florida bags have full zips and join in pairs. A bag weighs two kilograms and has a RRP \$89 (2.3 kilograms and \$99 with hood).

New products (on loan to *Wild*), and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcomed for consideration for review in these columns. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices, and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send items to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Photo: Rod Turner NSW



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# A Credit to Them?

'Absurd plan' comes under fire

A 'Rockclimbing Instructors' Accreditation Scheme' (see *Wild* Information) is being advocated by a small group in the Victorian Climbing Club and a small but apparently influential number of professional climbers.

Very few climbers have heard of their proposals and even fewer would have the slightest interest in them. Nevertheless I would argue that climbers should inform themselves about this absurd plan, that we should all care about the shape and 'rules' of the climbing game that we will ultimately hand on to our children and grandchildren. To me climbing has always represented a refreshing contrast to other aspects of life. Climbing is about taking personal responsibility, having fun, taking risks, but mercifully not about bureaucracy and rules. And that, of course, is just what their proposal is full of—a proposal riddled with 'musts' and 'must nots' . . .

The climbing world is entitled to ask who wants this scheme, who needs it, and, above all, who will benefit from it? Am I being paranoid when I suggest that, should the proposal be adopted, it will only be a matter of time before Park Rangers are running around ordering climbers without tickets off the crags? And who will benefit from that situation? . . .

Adults who want climbing lessons should take responsibility for their own necks and evaluate their instructor's expertise by enquiry and observation. Children will need to be protected as they always have, that is by school councils demanding to see staff-members' evidence of extended familiarity with the sport. . .

Funnily enough it is my older climbing friends who are most horrified by this nonsense, people in their fourth decade of active climbing. . . The last thing climbing needs is a bunch of bureaucrats patting each other on the back and handing out gongs to each other.

The VCC wants to hear climbers' opinions about the scheme. Get a copy (from GPO Box 1725P, Melbourne, Vic 3001) and respond while there's still time.

Steve Craddock  
Ashwood, Vic

## Guiding Lights?

On behalf of the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association, I wish to bring to your readers' attention the dangerous situation that is developing in the New Zealand mountains, particularly Mt Cook National Park. Our concern is the proliferation of inexperienced, unqualified Australian guides offering 'cheap' trips to New Zealand to help pay for their climbing holidays. . .

Commercial activities in National Parks, including guiding, require a license under the National Parks Act 1980. At Mt Cook there is one resident and five non-resident guiding operators who are licensed. . .

Three major assessment courses (each of 14 days), avalanche and skiing courses and 140 days of guiding work have to be completed

before a guide may become fully qualified (UIAGM) and is permitted to work alone. We are proud of the standards of our Association which have helped create a renaissance in the New Zealand guiding scene after the 'darkness' of the 1960s and early 1970s.

There are now several amateur 'guides' working out of Australia. Some are good climbers, but have no guiding experience. Some have done part of our Training Scheme and feel that in itself qualifies them. . .

Professional standards are not being met by these amateur 'guides'. They are not licensed to guide. They are not qualified or experienced enough to guide in what is a very serious and demanding mountain environment. . .

Bryan Carter  
President  
NZMGA  
Mt Cook, New Zealand

## Feverish Clawing

We are foundation subscribers to *Wild*. Our 24 issues are conveniently bound in your binders and are well thumbed. We look forward to

publication of your index. (See the advertisement on page 16, Editor) We use *Wild* for trip planning and gear selection and our memory is failing with 24 issues. *Wild* is undoubtedly the most interesting publication of its type in Australia. There is a feverish clawing at the envelope as each new issue arrives. It has been a major factor in changing the direction of our lives. Now aged 50 and 48, we will leave our respective jobs this year, sell the family home and set off to personally experience many of the activities that have been so well accounted in *Wild*. We are keen photographers and diary-keepers, so perhaps we will eventually submit an article! Our preference is to make our own way through the outdoors—we are not club people. *Wild* makes preparation for outdoor activities just so much easier. Keep up your superb efforts.

Ian and Dawn Buckberry  
Helensvale, Qld

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181

# NATURAL SELECTION



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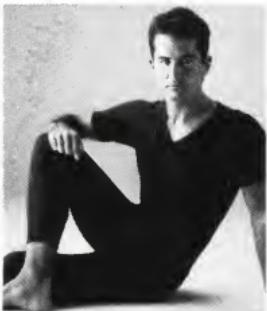
# When your teeth chatter this is what they're trying to tell you.

They're telling you you're cold.

Of course, you could put on a sweater or cardigan but they're a bore to carry around.

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That's because it keeps you dry next to your skin, any moisture evaporating to the outside of the fibre.

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Unlike some brands of thermal underwear, Holeproof Thermalite is non-flammable.

**Selected Thermalite products are available from:** **Victoria:** Myer and Myer Basement, Alexanders, Forges. **N.S.W.:** Myer, Grace Bros, David Jones, Waltons, Gowings, Lowes/Manhattan. **South Australia:** Myer, John Martins, David Jones, Harris Scarfe, Demasius, Thor Adventure Equipment. **Queensland:** Myer, David Jones, McDonnell & East, Baileys, The Ski Barn, Snow Biz Ski Centre. **Western Australia:** Boans, Aherns, Worths, Mountain Designs, Big Country Camping & Tramping, Scout Outdoor Centre. **Tasmania:** Myer, Fitzgeralds, Allgoods.

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Negative ions, no ironing.

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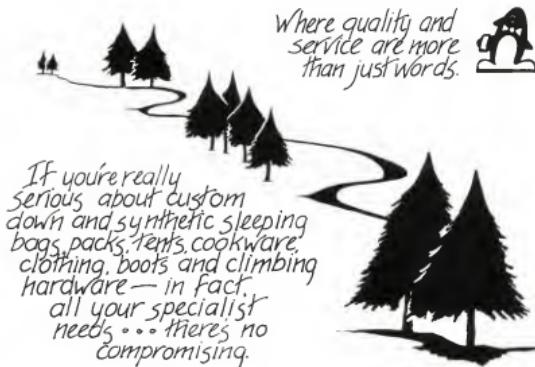


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**Prices** quoted in this advertisement are Australian dollars and are fully inclusive of all import duties and sales taxes. Postage or freight costs are extra as outlined above. We guarantee to maintain the advertised prices while stocks last or until the publication of the next issue of *Wild*.

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FX2 Siliconised Hollow Fibre Polyester filling for maximum heat retention and down-like soft feel.

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Available in left and right hand zip version to form into a double bag.

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- Filling: FX2 Siliconised Hollow Fibre Polyester
- Zip: Nylon Coil, with Autolock & Twin Tabs



Also available in combination model.



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Raging Thunder Sea Kayaking  
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40 Waymouth Street  
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Ph (08) 212 7857

Osprey Wildlife Expeditions  
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Scout Outdoor Travel Centre  
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40 Waymouth Street  
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Ph (08) 212 7857

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Ph (003) 34 0442

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Paddy Pallin Adventure Travel  
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PO Box 3865  
Ph (051) 55 9373

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PO Box 455  
Maffra 3860  
Ph (051) 48 2499





**OFF THE EDGE.** BASE jumpers, Dave Jordan (top) and Simon Wyatt, raising their pulse rates over the overhanging 300 metre East Face of Frenchmans Cap, Tasmania. Five parachutists made a total of 12 jumps, two of which ended in Lake Tahune and two in trees, in March. Photo Glenn Robbins. *Wild* welcomes slides for this page; payment is at our standard rates. Mail slides to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

# POLARPLUS



The most exciting hi-tech fabric to reach the Australian market in a decade. The fabric is fine denier Dacron Polyester from Dupont. This luxuriously soft to the touch fabric won't ever pull, stretch and never loses much of its insulation value even when soaking wet. The most versatile of pile fabrics, its lightness, stretch, warmth and good looks are the facts; now you can try the comforts of POLARPLUS. A style and colour for everyone, MOUNTAIN DESIGNS offers 5 styles with 32 colour combinations. Illustrated:- The Polar Up, a beautifully designed ladies' jacket.

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**Mountain Designs**

AUSTRALIA

## PERFORMANCE

Karrimor Rucksacs are used by many of the world's leading outdoor activists. Their exploits cover the entire spectrum of geographical challenges and climate extremes. Over the years we have developed a 'think tank' to tap the combined experience of these high performance personalities and incorporate their ideas in our products.

## PHYSIOLOGY

This knowledge, together with our increasing understanding of human Physiology, including the bone structure and overlying muscles, has kept us well ahead in the design of hip-loading rucksacs. Significant assistance was received from Dr. Steve Baker, the Sports Physiologist at Normal College, Bangor (Wales).

Jaguar



## TECHNOLOGY

Dr Baker also provided knowledge of the lumbar region and its importance in the design of the Karrimor back system.

The hip-belt on the last generation of Jaguar models was flexible and, in turn, allowed the wearer's back to flex. Now, with our new understanding of the spine and its needs, the new S.A. System has been designed so that, when fitted correctly, it will provide the necessary support physiologists refer to as 'good posture'. This works in much the same way as a weight lifter uses a belt to support his spine.

## THE SYSTEM

The Karrimor S.A. (i) Back System is fitted to the Condor Jaguar S and Jaguar E models. The Self-Adjust System provides the correct fit for most back lengths and is the only back length system that is easily adjustable whilst on the wearer's back.

The Karrimor SA(m) Back System is fitted to the new Panther (left). This is a modified version of the S.A.(i)

**Karrimor Rucsac design combines the sciences of Physiology & Anatomy with the experience, knowledge and skill of the all-time greats. The results are dramatic.**



# KARRIMOR

Karrimor also distribute a colourful range of Daysacs and other rucksacs, plus Cycle Panniers, Trangia Outdoor Cooking Stoves and Asolo boots.

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